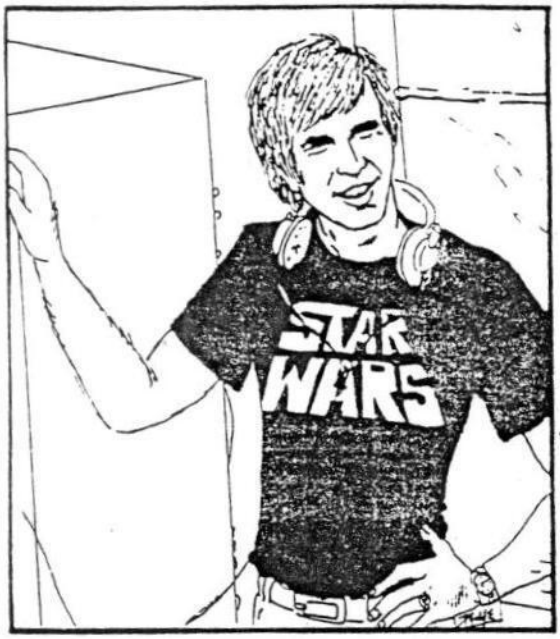
FACETS 4

FACETS 4



FACETS is published quarterly (we hope) by Hanover Press. Order from Jane Firmstone or Kelly Hill,1359 Portage Street, Kalamazoo, Mich. 49001

Cover price:
First class:
Third class:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page		
1	Ye Olde Editorial	ye eds
2	The MarketPlace	
4	Letters of Comment	our readers
8	The Riding Lesson *illustrated by Martynn*	Christine Jeffords
11	My Only Friend Friends *illustrated by Joni Wagner*	Beth Bowles Sheila Paulson
12	The Smuggler and the Jedi *illustrated by Martynn*	Christine Jeffords
16	HAN SOLO'S REVENGE: a review *illustrated by Becky Aulenbach*	Christine Jeffords
18	Confidences *illustrated by Zenobia*	Christine Jeffords
24	Motives *illustrated by Joni Wagner*	Martynn
26	Imperial Entanglements *illustrated by Paulie*	J.A. Berger
41	Tragedy at Racetrack	Peggy Barilla
42	Reward *illustrated by Martynn*	Sheila Paulson
43	Echoes of the Past *illustrated by Larry Blake*	Sheila Paulson
50	Who Only Wait and Suffer *illustrated by Gordon Carleton*	Martynn
53	For Maggie, 1944 *illustrated by Susan Perry-Lewis*	Ronni Sacksteder
54	Free *illustrated by Paulie*	Beth Bowles
56	Han Solo: A Ladies' Man for All Seasons *illustrated by Paulie*	Sherry Magee
61	Lettuce Farmer *illustrated by Paulie*	Jane Firmstone-Rafferty
62	That's Two Ya Owe Me, Junior!	Catherine Strand

Cover: Kelly Hill
Incidental art: pg. 3 -- McGuffin
pg. 41 -- Paulie
title page -- Paulie

Copyright c 1980 to Hanover Press. All rights reserved to the authors and artists represented herein. This copyright in no way intends to infringe upon those copyrights held by Lucasfilms Ltd., Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner Bros. Studio, Universal Studio, Random House Press, or any other holders of copyrighted material from which these fannish works have been derived.

Ye Olde Editoral

Hello again. The first thing that our old readers will notice about this zine is that, like Topsey, it growed. We did start out to be a 15 page letter-zine, honest we did. Things kind of got out of hand when we started receiving so many terrific manuscripts in the mail and realized that we *had* to expand our format to accomodate them. Our approximate length is going to be between 80 and 100 pages, or therebouts. If anything, the page count will go even higher as the influx of goodstuff continues. #5 is full and, hopefully, will go to press in November. #6 is full and will go to press as soon as the art is in and we have recovered from printing #5. #7 still needs some small submissions and should be out in time for MEDIA WEST CON. Hopefully, we will have submission rates for all you patient people by #5.

Well, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK has arrived and knocked most of our ideas into a cocked hat, but there were just too many good stories around to chuck them out the window because Lucas has decided that Han would look good in a block of metal. So, most of the stories we will run will have Han bopping all over the galaxy, as he has always done, because we have no real desire to read nothing but 'Let's rescue Han' stories. We undoubtably will be printing a few, but that's not *all* we want to print and we *are* a fairly limited zine, so, just consider the stories herein and in the future alternate universe and enjoy.

Speaking of EMPIRE, we liked it -- most of the time. Our local copy has the star cruiser in the opening shot wobbling as tho it has indigestion and that sort of spoils the beginning and Luke being sucked into the intake vent and ending up hanging from a weather vane eradicated the necessary suspension of disbelief. There were a few other technical points that bothered us, but not enough to ruin the movie. And we thought that the ending should have been punched up more to leave you with the impression that the calvary was off to rescue Han come hell or high water. Outside of those minor flaws, it was a hell of a movie. Harrison packed up the movie and walked away with it, combining consumate acting with an understanding of his character to show us the sides to Han that we all knew were there. It's not as much fun as STAR WARS, but it says a lot and it left us breathlessly awaiting #3 and The Great Thaw. It also left me wanting a taun-taun, but that's beside the point.

For a little STAR WARS-type fun we recommend BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS. The cast is so-so and there isn't much of a plot, but the special effects are excellent and the aliens are wonderfully believable. Picture a Terran cowboy (Geroge Peppard) roasting hotdogs and playing a harmonica with a group of friends (alien mercenaries) around a campfire that consists of two aliens who are thermal beings. Delightful. We also recommend THE BLUES BROTHERS, but, then, we're known to be strange.

Leonard May and his girl, Uschi, were here for nearly a week in July and we can recommend them as house-guests to anyone. They will be taking another tour through the States in 2 years, so anyone who thinks they might like to have a couple of German fans appear on their doorstep loaded with the most incredible Harrison Ford goodies, might want to drop them a line. The address is in the Marketplace column.

Now to get serious for a minute. A lot of us got a letter in the mail from the Duncan sisters just after EMPIRE opened (most of you who didn't get the letter heard about it, I'm sure) panning the film and demanding that we boycott the film and write to Lucas to protest and insit that he re-film EMPIRE. Then, several days later, we got the retraction, stating that their projectionist somehow misplaced several minutes of the lightsabre duel between Luke and Darth and that once they got to see those few minutes they liked the film again. Well, we thought it sounded strange too, but we chose to ignore it as fandom is nothing if not a refuge for strange people. A lot of people did not ignore them. It seems that one of the major entertainments in some sectors of fandom is how to plague the Duncans. It has gone beyond arguing a point of view to outright harassment. We find it hard to believe that fans who should know better (it *could* happen to *you* next) have nothing better to do. This sort of thing can(and frequently does) get out of hand. STAR WARS was fun, EMPIRE was fun, but vicious letter are not. The Duncans may be in trouble with Lucasfilm over their demands for boycott, so they have enough problems. N'est-ce pas?

Now to the one part of the editorial we never mind doing; the thank yous. First to Joni Wagner for the stunning Hanpic she did while suffering from the black plague amoung other things, while battling a last minute deadline. A special thank you to Tammy Gibbs and her dad for setting up the'article' on Ken to look as tho it came from a newspaper. And last, but not least, to Martynn who inspite of a regular job that takes up her days and singing opera at night, manages to turn out a startling amount of excellent art. We also have one apology. To Eva Albertsson whose poem "Corellian Epitaph" appeared in #3 without a byline. We ment to paste it on before we took it to the printer -- honest.

For those folks who wanted to order issues #1 & 2 and have been disappointed that we are sold out, Lori Chapek-Carleton has agreed to add those issues to the list of zines she has permission to xerox. If anyone is still in search of these issues, get in touch with her -- her address is in the Marketplace column -- and drop her a SASE for price. Thanks Lori!

News on the Ford front is as follows: Harrison attended both the Washington DC and London premieres of EMPIRE. Interesting sidenote: both the aforementioned premieres were charity benefits. The Washington premiere aided the Special Olympics, and the London premiere raised money for the British National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. It seems only fitting that a film that its creator envisioned as a children's film should benefit those children. Way to go, George!

As we're sure you've heard by now, Harrison is signed on for the third SW film, REVENGE OF THE JEDI, scheduled to start filming sometime later this year, or the first part of 1981, and due to be released in 1982 instead of the previously announced 1983. At this moment Harrison is in the Fog Capital of the world again, London, for fourteen weeks' filming on the Lucas-Speilberg collaboration RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK. Not much has been leaked about the film yet, except that it's action-adventure and is, supposedly, set in the 1930's. Some filming has been done in France as well as England and we've heard mention of Tunisia. Lucas and Speilberg are keeping a security lid on this project, so getting information is difficult. Even his manager doesn't know what it's about! HF is excited about the project, so that bodes well for it. RAIDERS is intended to be a trilogy, if the first movie goes over well, and HF wants to do them all, so look forward to seeing a lot of the man in the future.

We have had some requests for other fans addresses and were wondering if anyone is interested in a penpal column? If you are let us know and we'll print your name and address and anyother info you give us.

ATTENTION!! All correspondence intended for Harrison should be addressed in care of Pat McQueeney Management, 146 N. Almont Dr., Los Angeles, CA, 90048. All letters will get to Harrison and requests for pictures will be honored (if you wait til he's back in the States and request it, you may receive an autographed picture). Mail addressed to Renee Marsden will be returned unopened. Renee is HF's mail secretary, but she also works full time as Pat McQueeney's secretary and has a love life to maintain (she's getting married in November). She simply doesn't have the time to personally answer all your questions about Harrison. She has suggested that you send them to us, we will compile them and contact her about once a month. Enclose a SASE with your question and we will try to get you accurate answers. Be warned that under no circumstances does HF talk about his personal life.

The MarketPlace

SW ZINES

WARPED SPACE, available from Lori Chapek-Carleton, 5132 Jo-Don Dr., E. Lansing, MI. 48823. Offset reduced. Current ish #44. ST/SW/ general media zine. Many back issues still available. SASE for price and information. ((Highly recommended))

FALCON'S FLIGHT, available from Ellen Blair, Box 5117, T.T.U., Cookville, Tenn. 38501. Photocopy unreduced. Current ish #5. All back issues still available. Also from ellen, QUEST INTO OTHERWHERE a SF novel, limited run. SASE for prices.

GALACTIC FLIGHT, available from Christine Jeffords, 630 Bloomfield Ave., Verona, NJ. 07044 Photocopy unreduced. Current ish #3, with a limited number of back issues available. SASE for price and information.

ALDERAAN, available from Kzinti Press, P.O. Box 8554, Toledo, Ohio, 43623. Offset reduced. SW letterzine containing fan comments, reviews, and fine art. Sample 50¢ + business size SASE. Sub rates 4/$2.40. Make checks payable to Kzinti Press.

MOS EISLEY TRIBUNE, available from Jan Sidwell, P.O. Box 40973, Nashville, Tenn. 37204. Offset unreduced. Current ish #4. Back issues still available. Also from MET, STORM, a SW novel by Ann Wilson; details the fall of the Republic and the subsequent rise of Darth Vader. SASE for price and availability.

KESSEL RUN, a SW zine from Michelle Malkin, 6649 Castor Ave., Philadelphia, PA, 19149, is seeking submissions of all kinds. SASE for info.

FALCONER, available from Moonrise Press, 1 Tufts St., #6 Malden, MA. 02148. Offset reduced. TESB zine, due out Feb 1981. Accepting submissions till Oct. 31 '80. Also MOONBEAM and FELGERCARB, both general media zines. Back issues still available. SASE for more information

KUTA PUTA, available from Paulie Gilmore, 117 W. Main Court, Kalamazoo, MI. 49007. Mimeo. Due out Summer 1980. Accepting submissions for #2, especially art. SASE Paulie for more information.

SKYWALKER, available from Bev Clark, 744 Belmont Place East, #203, Seattle, WA, 98102. Offset reduced. Current ish #4 with some back issues still available. #4 includes FORSHADOWINGS, a novella by Paula Block and Judi Hendricks, illustrated by Joni Wagner. SASE for more info.

FANTASM, available from CC Terry, 521 Oakview Dr., Dayton, Ohio 45419. Offset. SW/ST/Superman/media zine. Projected publication date: Summer 1980. SASE for further information.

TWIN SUNS, available from Jani Hicks, 807B Patterson, Dayton, Ohio, 45419. Offset mostly reduced. Current ish #1 with #2 due fall '80. Submissions still needed. SASE for more info.

REVISIONS IV, available from Beth Bowles, 807M Patterson, Dayton, Ohio, 45419. Mimeo with offset art. Coming: STARWINGS, a SW/Dr. Who/ general media zine. Submissions of all kinds are needed. SASE Beth for more information.

SPICA, available from Charlene Fleming, 13029 NE 73rd St., Kirkland, Wash. 98033. Current ish #2. SW/ Galactica zine. Submissions needed for future issues. SASE for more information.

ORGANIA, an adult SW/ST zine from Bev Lorenstein and Judith Gran, 246 W. Upsal St. G-101, Philadelphia, PA, 19119, is still looking for submissions. Due out spring 1981.

OTHER ZINES

SAHSHEER, available from Kay Johnson, 107 W. Pocahontas Ln., Kansas City, Mo. 64114. Offset reduced. Current ish #2. New TREK zine, high quality printing. SASE for more information

DRACULA, available from Lori Chapek-Carleton, 5132 Jo-Don Dr., E. Lansing, MI, 48823. Offset reduced. Fanzine devoted to the king of vampires, mostly Langella version with others welcome. #1 still available, with #2 due out for Halloween. SASE for more information.

OTTER LIMITS PRESS, Paulie Gilmore, 117 W. Main Court, Kalamazoo, MI, 49007, has several zines in the works, all mimeo; LEDGENDS OF THE LOST WEYR, inspired by Ann McCaffery's dragon books; PARTNERS, BBB/DD Starsky & Hutch zines; GRYFFON'S STAR, a fantasy zine; JELLY BABY CHRONICLES, A Dr. Who zine with the emphasis on the present incarnation, Tom Baker; plus other zines still in a nebulous stage. SASE Paulie for more info.

STORMS, a fannish feminist excursion into the women of ST, SW and media, is seeking feedback, constructive advice, and offers of help from interested feminists. Please, no submissions of prose, poetry or art until October '80. SASE Charlene Terry, 521 Oakview Dr., Dayton, Ohio, 45429, for more information.

VARIOUS & SUNDRY

WANTED: TESB bubblegum cards #58,64 & 130. Have plenty of most other numbers to swap. Contact Ye Olde Editors at 1359 Portage St #1, Kalamazoo MI. 49001

WANTED -- anything and everything on Harrison Ford. Will buy or trade for photos, many of which aren't available in the States. Write Leonard May, Am Gerstkamp 21, 4630 Bochum W. Germany.

WANTED -- information on Harrison Ford articles and interviews for compilation in a SW bibliography. Need when published and where with xeroxes if possible. Send to Lita Sheldon, PO Box 1701, Navajo Community College, Tsaile, AZ. 86556

CHIMERA CREATIONS, CC Terry, 521 Oakview Dr., Dayton, Ohio, 45429. All kinds of delightful stuff; embroidered belts, purses, shoulder bags, tote bags, wall hangings, with dragons, unicorns, pegasoids and more. SASE for more info.

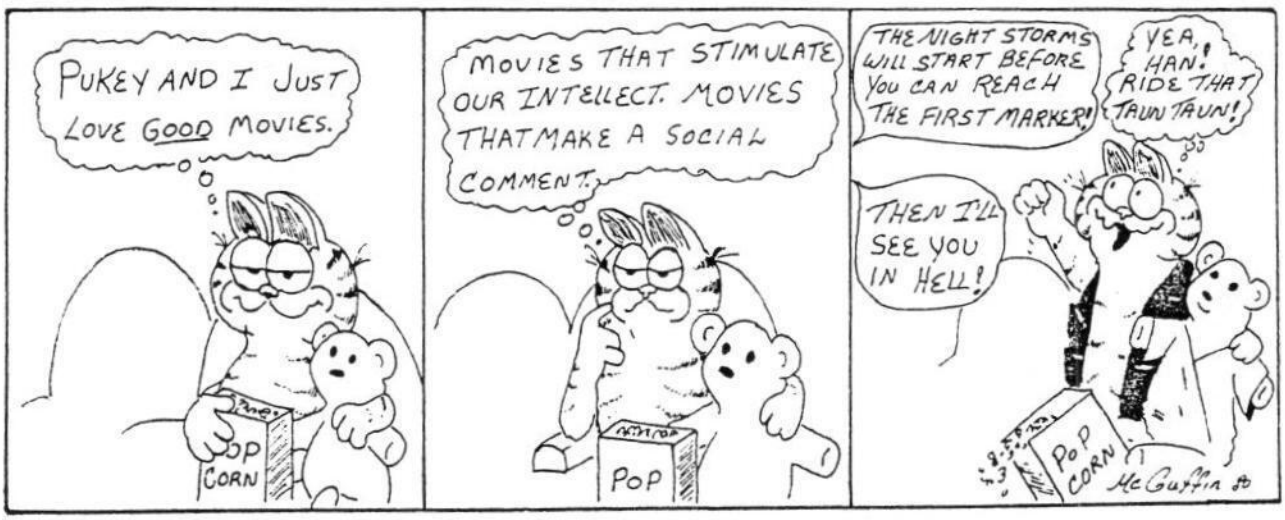
WANTED: Copies of SW zines that are now out of print, esp. SKYWALKER #3. Would appreciate anything as I'm new to fandom and don't have many zines. Contact Patricia Raddatz, 914 Clifton Blvd., Toledo, Ohio. 43607

STATIONARY, PHOTOS, Paulie Gilmore, 117 W. Main Court, Kalamazoo, MI, 49007, has stationary and note cards on various subjects including SW, Starsky & Hutch, Alien and fantasy subjects. Also will do custom stationary, calligraphy, badges and artwork; prices on request. Also has fine photos from SW/S&H and others. SASE for more info. ((All items highly recommended))

PHOTOS: Susan Jenkins, 4720 NE 74th Ave., Portland, OR, 97218, has 35mm photos from HF TV films and talkshow appearances. SASE for list. Will trade for in-person photos, new material (esp. foreign). Also wants the soundtrack from HANOVER STREET. ((If anyone finds this gem let us know too.)

Insertions in this column are free and should reach us at least 2 weeks before we go to print. Deadline for #5 is Nov. 10th.

GORTFIELD


PUKEY AND I JUST LOVE GOOD MOVIES.
POP CORN
MOVIES THAT STIMULATE OUR INTELLECT. MOVIES THAT MAKE A SOCIAL COMMENT.
POP
THE NIGHT STORMS WILL START BEFORE YOU CAN REACH THE FIRST MARKER!
YEA, HAN! RIDE THAT TAUN TAUN!
THEN I'LL SEE YOU IN HELL!
POP CORN
McGuffin

Letters of Comment

Sherry Magee, 3124 Wilkins Way, Carmichael, Cal. 95608

First of all, as a beginning author, I would like to thank editors Kelly and Jane for handling my work so nicely. I was very pleased with the way the material, both review and filk, were presented. Leonard May's illo was fine indeed for "Lament."

In case anyone wonders now a cartoon can have an author and illustrator, the idea for the drawing was mine, a whim born of discussions on the rumors surrounding Han's fate in TESB. Now I cannot draw -- not even a straight line with a ruler -- but Jane can, and after some gentle arm-twisting (I asked her), she agreed to draw Chewie dropping Han in a seal-a-meal bag into boiling water. I suppose we could have titled it "The Ressurection". Thanks again, Jane. I love it.

I compared my earlier copies of FACETS to #3. Did you use a different paper this time? The quality seems extra nice, sets off the illos. ((Don't ask us, ask our printer!)) And what nice ones you had! My favorite has to be Martynn's illo of Tommy for Madge Miller's article. Gorgeous. Also loved Paulie's one of Han and Luke.

Then there's Gordon Carleton. What can you say about him except that his drawings are hilarious. The collage was the perfect contrast to JJ's delightful "Force 10 from Hanover Street." Ken with the rabbit was my particular favorite, love the rabbit's expression. Poor HF. First he is threatened with freezing, then Gordon draws his head rising majestically from a batter.

Recommend the Harrison Cake recipe. Got to admit I was sceptical about a mincemeat cake, but it's yummy -- like gingerbread.

The technique of running a synopsis of HF's work in each issue is a nice one. It gives those of us who haven't had a chance to see everything a preview. Haven't seen DYNASTY yet, but will put it on my list if only to see the final confrontation scene.

Agreed with Jane that the finish of STAR'S End won't stand up to scrutiny, especially scientific scrutiny; however, I liked it since it reminded me of the Bugs Bunny cartoon "The Black Knight". At the conclusion Yosemite Sam (as the Black Knight, stealer of the Singing Sword) and his dragon are locked in the powder room of the castle tower, dynamite on all sides. The Dragon has caught cold and starts to sneeze. "Don't sneeze you silly dragon, or you'll blow us to the moon!" Of course the inevitable happens, and as they rocket to the stars, Bugs and the Singing Sword wave farewell, and Sam mutters, "Dragons is so STUPID!" So the end of Brian Daley's novel makes me laugh.

Tried Beth Bowles' filk "Spacer's Delight' out on my guitar, and it works fine. Thank you Beth. Another tune for my collections.

Enjoyed Lisa Adolf's Tommy tale, "What Man Has no Knife?" She managed to reform Tommy without converting him so completely that she ruined the qualities that made him so delightful. Nice story.

Loved all the Han stuff. Chris Jeffords did a nice job of expressing the confusion Han must be feeling after SW. All his notoriety seems a high price to pay for a simple charter. Both "Ties" and "You Ain't Gonna Go" were nice revelations of Han's ability to care for someone and deny it at the same time. "I know what I'm doing." Sure you do, Han.

Jani really got Ken right in her two shorts, "Yankee Doodle Dandly" and "Tomorrow". HEROES has become one of my favorite HF films and as a sucker for Ken stories I found her depiction of him very moving, as was her tribute to Ron Kovics.

Madge Miller's article "There's a Ford in Our Future" was most thought provoking. Harrison, indeed, does combine in his performances the qualities of strength and vulnerability, a combination guaranteed to appeal. My 70-year-old mother saw SW and three minutes into the cantina scene asked me who Han was. I asked if she meant the character or the actor. She replied the actor. "Harrison Ford," said I. "He's cute!" said she. Yep -- he appeals to the 5-105 set. Also enjoyed Madge's comparison to a car, the good chassis part. There ain't nothin' wrong with that boy's chassis!

Found Madge's comments about the new type of protagonist very interesting. Personally I'd be pleased to see male leads who are not afraid to be vulnerable. However, rather than seeing the "Renaissance" type as a contrast to the "anti-hero" of a few years ago, I see it as an evolution of that protagonist. Unless you limit the definition of "anti-hero" to the Bonnie and Clyde types, the tough yet vulnerable individual who tries to deny the sense of good or honor in himself has been with us for some time. Both Han and Tommy share characteristics common to John Wayne's Ringo Kid in "Stagecoach". Marlon Brando and James Dean exemplified "anti-heroes" who were both tough and vulnerable, and who experienced a re-emergence of integrity, i.e. "East of Eden," Rebel without a Cause", "On the Waterfront" and even "The Wild One". To me the biggest difference between the earlier and modern day anti-hero is that today our protagonists seem more comfortable about expressing their feelings. I take that as a positive sign.

Martynn, 361 McCully St., Pittsburg, PA 15216

I was, personally, all set for a "Frisco Kid" ish, but it seemed as thought #3 turned out as diverse as the actor in whose honor it is printed. Nice to see some new artists therein. Lori Koney's various Tommy Lillard heads have a rough-hewn, bold texture that compliments said character well. Lisa Mason's polished style turns out a suitable Han with only a tat of proportional inconsistency in the features. Gordon Carleton, pro artist, incurable punster, mad poet, huggable Wookiee and all-around great guy, is a household word in general fandom but new to FACETS, and Lori C.C. deserves a Heroine medal of her own for loaning him to you from WARPED SPACE. As you so correctly put it, only Gordon could illustrate a cake recipe! And his bevy of HF faces for "Force 10 from Hanover Street" is priceless -- especially those extra little Gordon touches and the disgruntled Kenny Boyd and Bunny. Y'uns keep saying such somplimentary things 'bout me in the editorial and I blush with embarrassment at the ego-boo. Gosh and shuckins, it wasn't nothin', folks! I reinterate the obligatory disclaimer that most of the credit goes to Mr. Ford for continuing to provide such excellent incentive by 'doing his job' so competantly and remaining so devastatinly decorative in the process.

Eva Albertsson lets no icicles grow on her funny bone. Of course she left off the rest of the caption, which should have read in total: "What, now? All right, kid, third door on your left ... and don't forget the can opener."

Sherry Magee does a competant review of FRISCO KID which goes into a lot more detail on the film itself rather than concentrating on Ford's performance exclusively as does Madge Miller. Aside: I loved the was ye olde editors used the Gothic typeface on all the FRISCO KID features to match the opening titles in the film. I particularly enjoyed the literacy of Sherry's article -- the allusion to Avram being the "Jewish Candide" , she gets revelations of the contrast between Tommy's "ignorant and profane" exterior and his warmth and gentleness concealed beneath the scruffy outer trappings. It was especially gratifying to see all those reasons why I felt Tommy was one of Ford's better efforts.

Between JJ's young Ford portrait and Monfett's synopsis, I got just enough sample of DYNASTY to want to see the film. I've always wanted to see one of those "sensitive younger brother" roles HF mutters about in his interviews, and DYNASTY sounds like one of the better specimins.

Of the two HEROES poems by Hicks, I preferred "Tomorrow". Both it and "Yankee Doodle Dandy" express valid vet points of view and the power and desperate internal turmoil of the 4th of July emotional cry is painfully well put. However, to me, "Tomorrow" is more of the resigned, hat-over-the-eyes empty-dream essence of Keny Boyd, On the other hand, Becky A's Kenny is not on a par with most of her SW stuff I've seen, perhaps because I prefer her bolder inking style, perhaps because she's more comfortable doing Han. Now Paulie does a lovely, heart-rending Kenny, half-angry, half hopeless, slouched and shadowed with all the little nuances which make Ford's role in HEROES so well executed and touching.

I've no doubt mentioned how much I enjoyed illoing Lisa Adolf's "What Man Has No Knife?" It's a perfectly logical and utterly enjoyable sequel to FRISCO KID once one suspends one's disbelief at Tommy 'going straight'. What I liked best was Lisa's mastery of the atmosphere and spirit of the story format. From "Shee-it", "Yep", and "I didn't holler like a Leslie", she has Tommy's number. And the theme of friendship and trust works out to bring a unity and very timeless message to the story in similarity with the film.

I had, with sinking spirits, read "Corellian Wake" and Magee's "Lament" is the fitting accompaniment, regardless of my fierce refusal to see Han snuffed.

Thanks to you, Jane, for the review of HAN SOLO AT STAR'S END. Glad you enjoyed it as much as I. Are you going to do HAN SOLO'S REVENGE? Not quite as good as its predecessor, methinks, but still better than Alan Dean Foster's scrodfodder. And just the mental image of the Master Marksman ... Ah yes, Becky's lethal Han is her nice heavy-contrast style again that makes such an attractive set-off.

Eek! This was going to be a short note. Better nonetheless mention Chris Jefford's very nicely constructed story-within-dramatic-monologue of "You Ain't Gonna Go". Winning combination, that: suspence as Luke's life hangs in the balance; character developement as Solo spills his guts to the unconscious kid in a battle to will ("force"?) him to live. And Chris has Han's speech pattern down pat. Then there's Paulie's incredible "Double Hangover" illo!

So there you have a nit-picky LoC of the latest ever-lovin' ish of FACETS -- mighty nice bird cage liner if I do say so. And the way it keeps on expanding and improving material -- well, you know I'm hopelessly prejudiced, but I still think that eventually Ford ought to recognize the zine and acknowledge it for the tribute it represents. Brava! Encore!

Beth Bowles, 807 M Patterson, Dayton, Ohio 45419

Let's start with the cover. It's good, but I don't think it's up to Martynn's usually outstanding abilities. I can't quite put my finger on it, but there's something not quite right about the face. It isn't the eyes, though, they're beautiful! However, the art Martynn has in the rest of the zine is, as normal, wonderful. In fact, I think my favorite piece of art in the zine is her Tommy on page 27.

I see that Becky Aulenbach has two pieces of art in the zine. The Han in the back is fine -- one of the few examples of her work that I like. However, the illo for Jani's poem is another story. If I didn't know it was supposed to be Ken Boyd, I'd never have recognized it. Reviews, a recipe and a synopsis just don't do much for me. Neither did anything else I haven't mentioned.

Do continue with FACETS. It's the only place I can get my fill of Harrison.

Christine Jeffords, 630 Bloomfield Ave., Verona, N.J. 07044

You've got a very nice zine here, and I'd agree that you're getting better each time out. Comment on comment: Lori C-C's letter about a "theme for each issue". I'd stay away from it. You are a Fordzine, not a one-film-zine, and although I enjoyed the HANOVER STREET issue, it was slightly spoiled for me by the fact that I never had a chance to see the film and have been obliged to piece together an impression of it from my correspondants and your own submissions. Similar with HEROES, DYNASTY, FORCE , and THE POSSESSED; always glad to hear about them of course, but I hope you'll manage to keep a mix in each issue; my own Ford-impressions being from SW and FK only.

Your print, thought small is crisp and clear. Salute to Martynn for that cover! Not that Martynn has ever done a bad illo in her life, but this is definitely one of the best of her portraits (as opposed to action pieces like those recently in FALCON'S FLIGHT #4).

Contents: Sherry's review of FK was right on the mark, and thanks to her for mentioning the fact that the credits should be sat through, both for the casting joke and for the filmed action underlaying. "Dynasty", "Tomorrow", and "Yankee Doodle Dandy" I don't feel qualified to comment on, since as mentioned I didn't get to see the films they were concerned with.

"What Man Has No Knife?" I thought was marvelous. After her "Little One" in FALCON'S FLIGHT it's great to see that Lisa can consistently catch the tone of interpersonal relationships; and she's captured both Tommy and Avram's speech patterns and attitudes perfectly. "There's a Ford in Our Future" is perceptive and intriguing, and I'll be interested to see if Madge is proved right.

"Ties" is another highpoint. Sheila has caught Han's language and his ambivalent attitude excellently. Though I didn't agree with Jane's critique of the ending of STAR'S END (see my own review of the book in FALCON'S FLIGHT #3) the rest of her review is, like Sherry's, apt and

on the mark. I do think that she ought to have clarified some of her references (such as Doc and the 'military background') -- as it stands it's fine for those of us who've read the book, but the purpose of a review is to tell people enough about the book or film to let them decide whether they want to see or read it themselves.

Art: about fifty-fifty. I'm well-pleased with the pieces selected for my own two poems, especially Lisa's Han for "What Are They Doing To Me?" Martynn, as mentioned, is up to her usual high standard, Paulie Gilmore is excellent, and Becky Aulenbach is getting better with every piece I see from her. Gordon's caricatures are, I suppose, fine if you like caricatures (I don't). As I did not see DYNASTY I'll pass on commenting on JJ's "Mark Blackwood."

On the whole, you've got a very nice zine here, and I hope you'll continue to improve in future issues.

Jacque Fasching, 6509 Middleham Place, Austin, Texas 78745

May I hand out the largest compliments to you and Kelly for the outstanding job done on FACETS #3! What a mild surprise to find my letter in the front! Moving right along, just thought it might be of some interest to you who made up the trivia quizzes throughout the past issues of FACETS that this past one on FRISCO KID was my highest rated one. I might even be considered as half-knowledgeable on the subject of Tommy Lillard and Avram B. That made me feel pretty darn good.

Lisa Adolf, I tip my yarmulke to you for that wonderful story, "What Man Has no Knife?" What a piece of work!!! I went as far as having other people around my office and home read the story and, in all cases, whether familiar with the characters or just newly introduced, the response was an overwhelming "Fantastic!" and I believe you have a hit on your hands. Any time you want to renew the characters is all right with me.

Martynn certainly went all out with her art work this time. I have never seen Harrison Ford/Tommy Lillard so beautifully represented. I especially love the picture on page 27 ... whoa!

Sherry Magee's "Lament Sung at a Corellian Wake" is nice, but, even after reading "The Corellian Wake" by Susan Matthews I still had the vague feeling that something is present which should not be. That being the strong Rebel ties the Corellian is pictured as having. Other than that, the atmosphere developed through the music is quite befitting a "Corellian Wake".

Jane Firmstone-Rafferty did an excellent job with the review of HAN SOLO AT STAR'S END. I guess the reason I enjoyed it so much (the review, that is) is because I agree with it so much. I especically enjoyed the statement about managing to "clean up Han's vocabulary without losing the color of his speech."

I did not enjoy Jani Hicks' "Yankee Doodle Dandy". Ken's use of slang terms does not fit in well with the character I found developed in HEROES. Ken had always appeared to be an accepting type of person, fatalistic. Now in Jani Hicks' poem, he is found holding a very large grudge against everything and nothing in particular. I do, however appreciate the allusions made to Ron Kovics' statements as an introduction. That did give the poem some merit.

"Ties" by Sheila Paulson is, at best, mediocre. This one poem reads like, pretty much, every other Han-Chewie relationship poem found in most fanzines in general. I would hope, however, that some of the lines therein will be used as developing points in her own writing in future. ("What do you mean, this could be home?" and "I still got my reward. There's no hurry.") I LOVE, however, the final statement made by Han to his Wookiee companion: "I know what I'm doing", spoken after a complete page of indecision. Nice touch to a needing piece.

Lastly is Chris Jeffords' "You Ain't Gonna Go" which almost brought tears to my eyes for two reasons: 1) LOVED the Han-Luke relationship developed within the course of the tale and would have cried if Luke had decided that it was time to meet his particular Maker. 2) at the completion of the piece, there was no more left to read! The zine was finished from cover to cover! What a bitter moment for us Harrison Ford fans!

I am anxiously awaiting issue #4 and know that, as the numbers compile and the quality broadens, as has been the standard for FACETS 1, 2, and 3, #4 should be a dynamo! My compliments!

Eva Albertsson, Pl. 410, S-970 13, Hakkasbyn, Sweden

Better and better! FACETS #3 is the best so far; I enjoyed every line and picture of it. Worthy of special notice were:

Chris Jeffords' "You Ain't Gonna Go: -- lovely piece that -- Sherry's wonderful "Lament" (my stomach is still in knots), and those delightful little cartoons of yours, featuring Han and the one-eyed tentacled what-not. I also loved Lisa Adolf's Tommy story, thought I'm still waiting around for the film to hit these heat-forsaken backwoods north of the border (the border in this case being the Arctic Circle). A flower to Paulie Gilmore for the illo of "You Ain't Gonna Go"; apart from that Martynn's front cover and Tommy-with-the-baby, along with Jane's frozen Corellian, were the best.

Jani Hicks, 807 B Patterson, Dayton, Ohio 45419

To begin with the cover, it certainly isn't my *favorite* Martynn; in fact it's nowhere near up to the level of accomplishment demonstrated by the other pieces she had in thish. Harrison's not that pretty. The art overall ranges from fantastic (pp. 27, 34, 20) to horrendous (pp. 13, 18, 37). And of course you know I love Jane's Han on p. 29 or I wouldn't have bought it last year.

The written material is also unevern, ranging from fantastic (the only thing I could find wrong with "What Man Has No Knife" qas a typo or two and Tommy saying 'tyke' -- that's a Victorianism ((the story is set in 1850, that was during the Victorian era)))to mediocre (the "Dynasty" synopsis -- the only thing more confusing than a soap opera is a soap opera synopsis). And I think you over did the reviews a little -- come on, FOUR in one ish? What is this, SATURDAY REVIEW? And I hope that "You Ain't Gonna Go" is the *last* time I see Beth's poem answered/debunked/ripped off. Chris' other poem is beautiful, but in addition to the topic of the second one, I find the style very stilted and (no pun intended) forced. There was absolutely no difference from a piece of prose; I was under the impression that poetry was intrisically different from prose writing, not just respacing of it. It's the first of her poetry I"ve seen, and after reading her incredible prose stuff I wonder why she bothers.

I also see a few graphics problems. The title graphics don't match -- it's jangling to the eye to see title and author's name in two different fonts. And the font you've used in many cases, for the title doesn't fit its spirit. For instance, the font you use for "Force Ten

From Hanover Street" is an absolute *natural* for the FRISCO KID pieces, instead of Gothic (ugh) which is damn near unreadable anyway. Also, the G.K.W. Computer font you used on "Spacer's Delight" speaks to me of machinery, not of the free-flowing spirit of the filk.

The 'toon art is uniformly primitive, with the exception of Gordon's stuff which aren't really cartoons anyway. I really don't think that a cartoonish style implies an early third grade level of artistic performance. As an example, Pam Kowalski's cartoon style (have you seen her hysterical back cover for the new ELAN VITAL-- Han selling wind-up Kenobi dolls?) is a simplification of her illustrative style without being insultingly simple. Come on, Jane, take a little more than ten minutes per illo. I know you can do lots better.

All in all, I'm sorry to say that I don't see FACETS improving with age. If anything, thish was weaker than the last. I understand you're having trouble getting artists, but that's no excuse for taking second and even third rate material. Let's wait and see #4 I've got my fingers crossed. As it stands now, this is not a 'zine I would have bought.

Chris Callahan, 6101 Seminole Street, Berwyn Hghts. Md. 20740

Just finished FACETS #3. Didn't get #2 since I didn't see HANOVER STREET, but #3 is light years better than #1!

To start, your cover is probably the best piece of Martynn's that I've ever seen -- drool! It really is a beautiful illo, and much better than her drawings for "What Man Has No Knife?" For quality of artwork I'd rate Becky Aulenbach's illo for the review of HAN SOLO AT STAR'S END next, with Lisa Mason's illo for Jeffords' "What Are They Doing to Me?" a close third. Gordon Carleton's stuff is -- well, Gordon Carleton. Short on artistic quality but long on humor were Jane's cartoons on page 9 and 33.

Loved Chris Jeffords' two poems, and both Sheila Paulson's "Ties" and Sherry Magee's "Lament Sung at a Corellian Wake" were almost as good (I read the Matthews story too and loved it, depressing though it was).

The only HF movie I've seen is SW (I don't count AMERICAN GRAFFITI since I didn't really notice Bob Falfa -- too busy staring at Paul LeMat -- and didn't have time to see it on the re-release year even thought I claim it as "my movie", being a 1962 high school graduate). However, I did very much enjoy Lisa Adolf's "What Man Has No Knife?" and assume the characterizations were accurate. From what I've seen of Lisa's work she definitely one of the better fan writers around, and it's interesting to see a fan story that isn't SW!

As for Jane's review of STAR'S END -- well, by comparison with the first book, HAN SOLO'S REVENGE was not too far from the Montezuma's variety in my opinion! STAR'S END is far superior to REVENGE, and we won't mention the other 'pro' novel. Quite frankly, I've read better fanfic than Brian Daley's efforts, but SE comes out as equal to pretty good fanfic while REVENGE is mediocre. I would love to see SE filmed -- can you imagine that spectacular ending in 70mm? Fanflippintastic! Daley has managed a pretty good job of character development in both books, esp. SE, though I thought the droids were a bit too derivative. I have a small quibble, though. Jane, you say Daley's explanation of Han's military background will have to stand, becuase Lucas obviously approved the book. Well, he approved Foster's also, which seems to me a pretty good indication that he's able to accept publication of views that don't mesh with his personal vision as it will presumably be defined in the film. Do you remember the street scene in Mos Eisley, when the troopers come barging through and everyone gets out of their way? One of the two men who quickly step into a doorway is wearing jeans with a beige stripe, and in the trailer for TESB, Han's jeans have a yellow stripe. The differences in color don't fit with Daley's statement that Han't red-striped jeans are part of his old uniform. I'm not saying he doesn't have a military background, but Lucas himself has not said so, and until he does I'm going to continue considering Daley's and Foster's novels and the Holiday Special as apocryphal, with only the movies and their novelizations as cononical sources (and where the novelizations contradict the movies, the movies are the last word). Just looked at the review again and was reminded once more of the payoff to Ploovo. Wouldn't that be fun on screen? Shades of the face-grabber in ALIEN! And a lot funnier. Yes I do wonder how Lucan would show his payoff to Jabba. If we're real lucky, maybe that's get a quick scene or at least a verbal description in TESB ((alas, no, but maybe next time?)).

Ellen Blair, Box 5117, T.T.U., Cookeville, Tenn. 38501

Hey, wowie! For a Hanaholic this is great fun! #3 is my first ish of the zine (I oughta be kicked for letting #1 and #2 slip past me). Let's see -- favorites are "What Are They Doing to Me?" and "You Ain't Gonna Go", both by Chris Jeffords, and "What Man Has No Knife?" by Lisa Adolf. I like Lisa's story partly because I o-d'd on FRISCO KID and adored HF's portrayal of Tommy, and partly because I liked the way Lisa handled Tommy and Avram's characters. I always believed Tommy would go straight. I don't thing Avram would say 'goddamn' under any circumstances, but this was a very minor flaw. Chris' poems struck a nerve -- they were so emotional yet so restrained, so very Han that they were very moving to read. I tend to overplay Han's emoting in my own work because I have a tendency to make him a little sappy. But Chris has caught the high-strung tenseness of feeling in Han and played a very beautiful melody on it. People like Han appear to be very reserved because they are very much aware of their own feelings. A superficial person would slap his feelings around indiscriminantly. Han is not superficial, as we all well know. Christine has done a fine job of delineating the intter man with a keen awareness of his psyche and the expertise of the disciplined writer.

Martynn's illos are, as always, magnificent and I loved Paulie's work for "You Ain't Gonna Go". This is the first time I've seen her work. she's very good. (Paulie, where are you? Could I talk you into signing on with FALCON'S FLIGHT?)

The rest of the material was well done. The reviews were crisp and succinct. Lisa Mason is another good artist. Everything -- very nice. The only thing I object to, and this is a minor complaint, is the reduction of print on full page stuff. It's difficult for my eyes to track these small lines. Okay if the format is double columns, but otherwise it hinders my appreciation of the work.

****

The Riding Lesson

CHRISTINE JEFFORDS

Han cursed and fought the reins as his tauntaun reared and slung its head. His breath steamed in Hoth's frosty air.

On the threshold of one of the small camoflaged surface doors that gave entrance to the Rebel Alliance's underground base, Luke Skywalker, Leia Organa, and Chewbacca watched as the smuggler's unorthodox mount backed and circled, circled and backed. The two young humans were warmly bundled in the standard Alliance winter kit -- bulky short jacket, leggings, lined boots and gloves, muffler and fitted hood with clear anti-snow-blindness facemask. The Wookiee wore nothing but his own shaggy brown fur coat and ever present bandolier and hip pouch. Luke sat firmly astride a second tauntaun, his hands tight and firm on the reins, while Leia held the headstall of a third, smaller animal.

Skywalker knew he shouldn't be enjoying the Corellian's difficulties, but the whole sight was really so ridiculous that he simply couldn't help himself. Bundled in heavy arctic pants and boots and a hip-length coat unearthed from some unsuspected closet aboard the *Falcon*, his furred hood fallen back between his shoulder blades, his legs looking ridiculously long as they dangled in the stirrups below the tauntaun's belly, Han was quite obviously out of his element. The contrast between his present situation and the casual assurance he displayed aboard his ship was such that Luke nearly strangled in the effort not to laugh. "What's the matter, Han?" he choked at last, bending over the saddlebow as he tried to catch his breath. "Trouble?"

Solo brought his gloved fist down hard on top of the recalcitrant animal's skull, dead between the horns, where a thick shield of bone protected the miniscule brain. As the startled tauntaun lurched, dropping, he grabbed at the saddleframe for balance with one hand and sawed at the reins with the other. "Kid, it's just that me and organic transport don't get along together. Now if this thing just had a navicomputer and a drive -- "

The tauntaun uttered a gargling bray that Han could have sworn was laughter, and the Corellian cursed again. "Too much for you, Captain Solo?" Leia enquired sweetly.

"Everybody's a critic," growled Han. He didn't really mind getting it from Luke -- the kid was, after all, a farmer, and had a certain inborn rapport with animals. But the princess was another matter altogether. "As I remember, this whole thing was your bright idea in the first place. I don't notice <u>you</u> getting up!"

Luke, seeing the trend of the conversation, hastened to lubricate the troubled waters. "Come on, Han, you *should* learn to ride. Leia's right."

"Why?" snapped Solo. I got a ship, and I can get anywhere you name in a time part in it."

"And suppose there was an Imperial cruiser monitoring Hoth and it picked you up?" Luke responded. "Nobody can pick up a tauntaun. "

"Who'd *want* to?" muttered Solo, dragging on his reins and drumming heels against the tauntaun's flank as he'd seen Luke do. "Come on, you *zeft, parash virekhi, shorisagheara gakhda* --" He trailed off into an indistinct succession of exotic curses that died away in mutterings and snarlings. The tauntaun paid no attention whatever. It simply set itself and balked determined, completely ignoring its rider's attempts to get it going.

"Poor Captain Solo," sighed Leia mockingly. "You really don't seem to be able to get the hang of it, do you?"

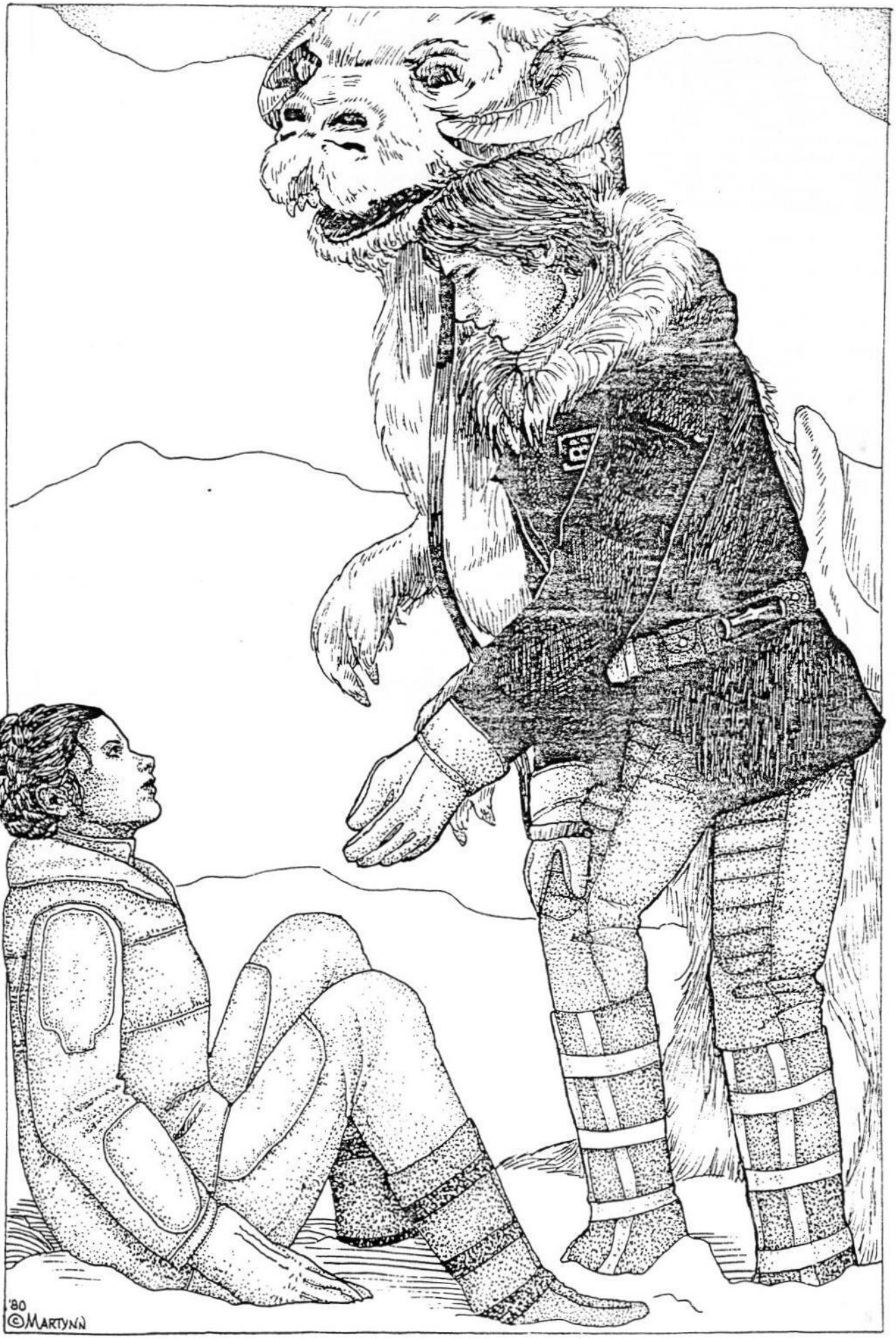
Han whirled on her, in the process yanking so hard on the tauntaun's reins that it bawled a sideslipped, nearly unseating him all over again. "Think you'd care to try it, your Worship?"

"Certainly," answered Leia coolly. "Nothing is too difficult for one of royal blood. *I*, of course, am accustomed to *all* forms of transport." She turned as if to mount her own animal.

"Now that ain't fair," Solo objected. "*This* is the one that's giving me all the trouble. You straighten *him* out and I might believe you."

Leia looked from him to Luke, then shrugged. "As you wish."

"Lemme shorten the stirrups for you, Highness," Solo offered. "Chewie, come hold this beast, will ya?"


'80
©MARTYNN

The Wookiee lumbered up through the snow and caught the tauntaun by the bits, holding the animal firmly despite its efforts to shake its head free. Solo clambered down from the saddle and began messing with the stirrup straps. Behind the shielding neck of the tauntaun, his eyes met his partner's questioningly. Chewbacca knew that look. As clearly as words, it said: Are you thinkin' what I'm thinkin'?

Chewie, as usual, was prepared. Under cover of the tauntaun's body, which hid the motion from Luke and Leia, he dipped a hand into his old hip-pouch and brought out something small, dark and roughly elliptical which he passed quickly into Solo's waiting palm. The Corellian looked at it and grinned into the synthefur of his hood lining. What he held was a hard, prickly stone from one of the hydroponically-grown fruits they'd had at breakfast. He didn't stop to question why Chewie should have saved one; the Wookiee had genius for picking up things that later proved tremendously useful.

Palming the stone with a card player's skill, Han moved around to the other side of the tauntaun and began adjusting the stirrup there. His own body served to conceal the swift movement of his arm and hand as he carefully inserted the stone beneath the saddle, just where a rider's weight, settling back into the seat, would drive it against the tender part of the animal's back.

A moment later he stepped back and bowed to Leia with an inviting flourish. "Your charger awaits, Princess."

Leia advanced confidently, grasping the reins and pommel in one hand and the cantle in the other, and waited for a boost. Solo gallantly furnished one. The little Alderaani rose lightly to the saddle, her every move indicative of long experience with riding animals. AS that exact instant, almost as if by previous arrangement, Chewie let go the bits and Han stepped hastily back.

Leia's weight settled astride the fork--and the tauntaun exploded.

The princess squeeled and grabbed leather as her mount doubled and twisted, slinging its head and bucking. Luke yelled in surprise, and his own mount brayed and pitched in sympathy. Leia lurched in the saddle, daylight showing between the seat and her britches, and inelegantly threw her arms around the tauntaun's neck in an effort to keep her place. Too late. With a final wild convulsion the tauntaun's front went down, its rear went up, and Leia flew forward over its head, sailing with threshing limbs for a meter and a half to land face-down in one of the snowbanks that flanked the entryway. Her tauntaun wheeled and took off across the snowfield, Luke pounding in hot pursuit.

Solo laughed until he fell backward onto his rump in the snow and the tears streamed down his face. Mastering himself with a supreme effort of will, he lurched upright, grabbing the arm Chewie extended, and staggered over to the drift, where Leia was pushing herself up on stiffened arms, spitting out snow.

"You O.K., Highness?" he inquired solicitously, helping her up and brushing snow off her suit. "Not as easy as it looks after all, is it?"

Ninety meters onto the snowfield, Luke caught up with the fleeing tauntaun, guiding his own mount up beside it to grab its bridle and drag it to a pitching hault. As the two animals lurched unevenly to a stop, something small and dark fell out from under the saddle of Han's and plopped into the snow.

Puzzled, Luke eased out of his saddle, looping both sets of reins over his arm, and dug out the enigmatic object. Since he'd eaten one of the same fruits for breakfast, he had no difficulty recognizing it.

"Oh, no," he whispered, glancing back over his shoulder at the Corellian, who was helping Leia to her feet. "Han, what are we going to do with you?"

He looked at the stone, glanced again at his companions--and then shrugged, dropped the object into the snow, and stepped on it, driving it deep in. Shaking his head and chuckling, he swung back aboard his mount and turned toward the entry.

FACETS #5, our holiday ish, due out for Christmas 1980. Will accept submissions of written work until Sept. 15, artwork till Nov. 1. Contents to include: "Home for Christmas" by Sherry Magee (Ken Boyd's uneasy Yule with the family he never came home to); "Tidings of Comfort and Joy" by Denise Sheets (Officer Bob Falfa, a small boy and a teddy bear add up to a Christmas miracle); "A Festival in Paradise" by J.A. Berger (a life renewal festival on an exotic world turns out to be more than Han, Luke and Leia have bargained for); "The Way Home" by Sheila Paulson (It's Life Day and Han and Chewie are in jail, but Han has a way out -- for Chewie); "A Day in the Life of Han Solo" by Eva Albertsson (a combination Life Day and Halloween story); plus poetry by Sherry Magee, Sheila Paulson and the Chicago Contingent Plus One; and art by Martynn, Paulie Gilmore, Zenobia, Joni Wagner, Larry Blake, and Gordon Carleton.

FACETS #6, tentative due date March 1, 1980. Written submissions are filled, but will accept artwork till Feb. 1, 1980. Contents to include: "Occupational Hazard" by Eva M.E. Oslo (the preface to Han's fateful meeting with Greedo in the cantina); "Second Time Around" by Chris Jeffords (Han Solo and Lando Calrissian, round one); "An Honest Job" part one, by Elyse Dickenson (running for the rebels can be hazardous to your health); "A Bad Case of Corellian" by J.A. Berger (Han and Leia land on a planet whose natives believe Han in heat); "Intergalactic Colloquey" by Eva Albertsson (what kind of conversation might Han and Harrison have?); plus poetry by Susan Matthews, Chris Cohea, and Sheila Paulson, and art by Martynn, Paulie Gilmore, Pam Kowalski, Becky Aulenbach, and Larry Blake.

FACETS #7, tentative due date June 1, 1980. All kinds of submissions are still needed. Contents so far include "An Honest Job" part 2, by Elyse Dickenson, and "Home is the Hunter" by Kelly Hill, from an idea by Beth Bowles (Matt Diggs has claimed his revenge, and Tommy's hot on his trail). Written submissions until April 1, artwork until May 1.

My Only Friend

by

Beth Bowles

I prayed for a teacher,
and you appeared.
You showed me how to hunt and fish,
guided me to San Francisco,
fought my enemies for me --
And forgave me for not fighting with you.
You did all this,
not knowing who or what I was,
And in the end
you helped me see myself as I am.
I owe you my life many times over,
And all I can offer in return is
my friendship.

Friends

by

Sheila Paulson

I never had a best friend before,
But just tell me this:
What the hell do I do with this one?
He's crazy, he's gotta be crazy.
And I must be a little crazy, too,
'Cause every since I bumped into him,
I been doing the dumbest things.
He ain't got no more sense than a baby.
Probably he woulda wound up in China, wherever that is,
If I hadn't showed him which way was San Francisco.
But sheeit, he had me running from a posse on foot.
He got me caught by Indians.
Thanks to him, I even got shot.
Hell, I really must be crazy.
He needed a friend, I guess, or
He'd probably been killed along the way.
Maybe not, though. He stood up to those Indians okay.
For a rabbi, he ain't too bad.
Aw, hell, who'm I kidding?
I stuck with him because I like him.
There'll be times when I'll want to knock his head in.
But I'll keep coming around
'Cause I ain't never had a best friend before,
And I kinda like it.

The Smuggler and the Jedi

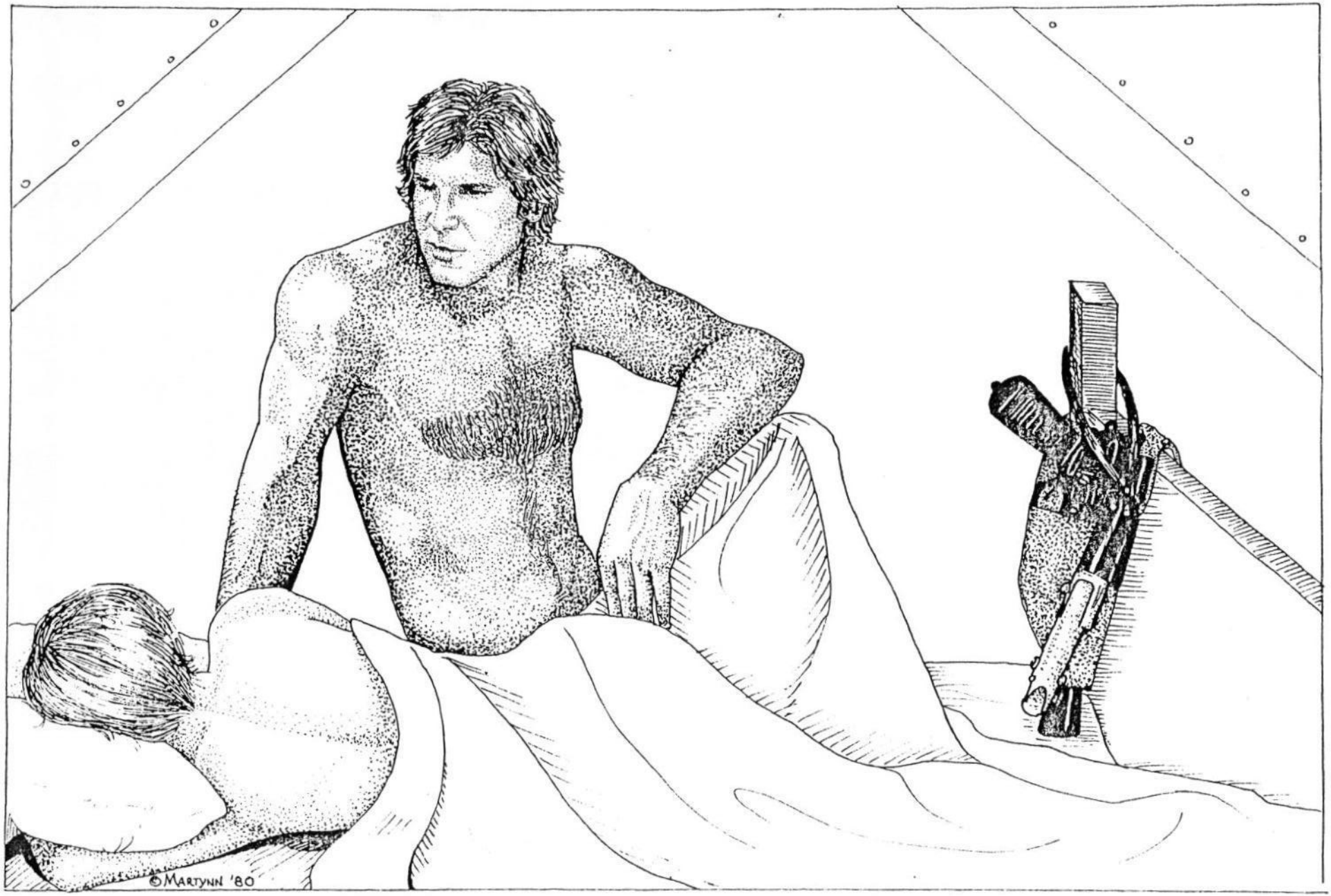
CHRISTINE JEFFORDS

There she lies,
in my quarters, in my bed,
sharin' my space, my warmth,
sleepin'. She looks like a child,
her face all at peace, her eyes
shadowed dark, the lashes thick beneath 'em;
the swell of her lip, the curve of her cheek --
it's like, for a little while,
she's forgotten what she lived through,
twenty years ago, and how
she's been runnin' and hidin' ever since.
I'm happy I could please her so,
but I still can't understand it.

Why me? What am I
that she should choose me?
A drinkin', gamblin', rough-tongued
Corellian smuggler -- 'Captain', I call myself.
And of what? one beat-up old rust-bucket
of a freighter, and one surly
shaggy Wookiee ... She's a Jedi,
a medic, a pilot, a warrior --
she knew Kenobi, her folks
were Knights for generations back.
She sits on the Reb council now,
and even Her Highness shuts up when she talks.
She could have any man she wanted -- Sharl knows,
she's handsome enough to take her pick,
even if she wasn't what else she is.
So why does she pick me?
How is it that she cares for me?

Honey, sleepin' beside me,
if anybody'd ever told me,
a year or so ago, who my lover'd be
today, I think I'd have called 'em
a damned liar. 'A smuggler and a Jedi,'
I'd of said. 'Thanks, but no thanks.
I don't appreciate the humor.'

And yet you're here,
and I'm here, and I swear,
there's my heart, on the sheets beside you.
How do these things happen? Could it be
that there's something of this Force in all of it?
You've saved my life, twice in two days;
you told me you knew,
from the moment you first met me,


©MARTYNN '80

that I was the man you'd been waiting for --
not just to take you to the Alliance,
but to make your life whole.
Why?

What is Han Solo
that you should be mindful of him?
that you should choose him to share
your nights, your thoughts,
the beat of your heart, the warmth
of your body, the rush of your passion?
I got no right to your love,
me with my bloody hands
and my mercenary soul
and yet you give it to me,
and it's a wonder to me, honey,
a miracle, like that first time
I stood on the old Thunderbolt's bridge
and watched the stars streak in rainbow lights;
like the time I stood, and wondered
at the crystal mountains of Luumai,
or the singin' forests of Praith.
I've flown from one side of this galaxy
to the other, honey,
I've seen things that could scare a man shitless,
or awe him to his soul's roots, or make him feel
like a god -- but I've never
known anything that did all three
at once, the way bein' your man does.

My heart ain't made of stone,
no matter what some folks in the rebellion say --
but most all my life I've been what my name is;
Solo, and then you came -- and now
you got such a hold on me,
it don't seem I'll ever shake loose.
And yet I don't feel chained,
like I would with any other lady,
and if you tried to walk away,
I'd be beggin' you to come back.

But it can't last --
can it? You can't really mean
that we're forever, you and me.
We ain't a thing alike,
and though I try to please you,
and quiet you when you have nightmares,
and understand when you talk
of things I've never experienced,
I just can't see any woman
carin' for me to her life's end,
let alone past, the way you say Jedi do.
Even Cyr and me, back on the Thunderbolt --
When we were together, it was fun,
when we weren't we loved the ones
we were with, and no blamin'
on either side. I guess
what I'm tryin' to say --
sayin' it while you're asleep, 'cause I know

I'd never have the courage to say it
to your wakin' face (big man Solo,
the Corellian, the smuggler,
the gambler and gunfighter, the 'best',
cocky, carefree Solo, too cowardly
to tell his lady what he feels) -- is that
I got no frames of reference
for anything like what we're doin',
and maybe I need reassuring.
I guess you'd understand --
you understand so much --
but I just can't bring myself
to talk like this when you can hear.
Of all the strange things
that've happened to me since Kenobi
found me in Mos Eisley and chartered the Falcon,
I guess havin' you choose me
is the strangest; and I still
can't believe my own senses
when I think how much better you are than me.

Is this what they mean
when they talk about love? Is this
what the kid feels about him and his princess?
Are my eyes shinin' now like his do
when he talks of her, and dreams
of what the future holds? I dunno.
I guess maybe I never was in love before.
Sure thing I never felt like this
for any woman -- even Cyr, or Zera
who first taught me the wonders
of a girl's body and a boy's
joining, on the cliffs above
the Sea of Dragons. It aches,
'way down somewhere in my chest,
in my throat, and yet the pain
is sweet to feel, and I'd miss it
if it wasn't there -- if you weren't there --

Honey, let me kiss you
as you sleep at my side, let me
touch your hair, and don't wake --
all I want is to watch you, so peaceful
and so beautiful (so beautiful to me,
who've known a hundred ladies
others would call lovelier) -- watch you
and think how fortunate I am
that you've chosen me, however
little time we have together.
I promise you,
as long as you want me, I'll never
take another -- as long as you want me
I'm yours for the ownin', sure as if
I was a droid with a restraining bolt
fused onto its chest.
Honey, I love you.

But what is Han Solo
that you should love him?

HAN SOLO'S REVENGE

reviewed by

CHRISTINE JEFFORDS

"Rob'em blind, that's my kind of revenge." So proclaimed Han Solo in the excellent predecessor (HAN SOLO AT STARS END) to this book.

But, like so many of Han's more grandiose plans, this one seems to fall through in HAN SOLO'S REVENGE. And Han is just where we would expect to find him: up to his neck in trouble.

The story opens on the planet Kamar, which seems to be very like Tatooine, except that it has only one sun (a white one) and a native insectoid race. Han and Chewbacca, broke as usual -- thanks to an abortive attempt to smuggle, of all things, mineral water -- are stuck on Kamar with nothing much more to their names than a barely-operative *Falcon*, a battered old holoprojector with a single travelog cube, and our two old friends Bollux and Blue Max, the droids from STARS END. When the projector is destroyed by a mob of irate viewers, the smugglers, barely escaping with skins intact, learn of a cargo to be picked up on Lur. The cargo turns out to be slaves, and Han wants no part of that trade. But when he and his partner manage to get out of the deal -- killing the head slaver and several of his goons in the process -- Han still intends to be paid for his trouble. "Somebody owes me money; I have ten thousand credits coming for this run and I want it," he says.

The boss slaver's trail leads the partners back into the space of the Corporate Sector Authority, where they meet Fiolla of Lorrd, an auditor-at-large for the Authority, who is herself interested in the slavers -- she has information that they are linked with any number of high ranking execs. They also find themselves plagued by an otterine skiptracer (a sort of interstellar repossession agent) called Spray, whose every intention it is to attach the *Falcon* for debts unpaid. Since Fiolla's partner has disappeared and she needs to get offworld in a hurry, she charters Han's ship, thus fending off Spray -- but since Spray has a vested interest in the condition of the ship until the debt is cancelled, he insists on going along. Escaping several attempts at murder, the foursome, with droids, finally makes it to Ammuud, where Han believes he will find someone who can put him on the trail of his money, and Fiolla on the trail of the slavers' top backer. He does, but this time, after a running duel between the *Falcon* and three armed slavers' boats, the resolution of the matter is taken out of his hands by the arrival of an Authority destroyer. Several startling revelations later, however, Han Solo is once again in command, and there we leave him with, presumably, his money in reach and his freedom assured.

Though fully as exciting and action-packed as HAN SOLO AT STARS END, REVENGE seems somehow more like a series of connected progressive scrapes than like a single adventure building toward a climax. This is not to say it's inferior. To this reviewer, at least, the events of REVENGE seem more like the sort of "business as usual" thing that Solo and Co. might encounter in the course of their various less-than-legitimate enterprises. It might be said that STARS END chronicled the major confrontation of Han with Higher Authority prior to his famous charter out of Mos Eisley, while REVENGE picks up the thread of his life at a point where things are more or less back to normal. It is, after all, doubtful that even Solo could survive very many more confrontations such as that of STARS END long enough to even appear in STAR WARS!

Brian Daley's skill hs diminished not one whit since the publication of STARS END, He continues to portray his two main characters convincingly, to insert just the right amount of technical throwaway in the stream of his story, to delineate his lesser figures well, and to spice the whole thing with plenty of wry humor. Perhaps the most thoroughly enjovable segment of the book, in this respect, is Chapter V, which introduces Spray (to Chewbacca, whose reception of him and his mission is understandably ferocious) and finds Han and Fiolla utterly bewildering a novice nonhuman waiter in a spaceport cantina. Along the way he casually informs us of several aspects of the SW universe that we didn't know before. We learn, for example, that droids can be manumitted, and that Bollux and Blue Max have, since the events of STARS END, attained this enviable status:

" ... He said they wanted to see the galaxy, but sometimes I think they're both circuit-crazy. When they were manumitted, they asked to sign on with me. They're swapping labor for passage."

And, as in the previous book, he expands somewhat on the mysterious Solo past:

... Roa ... one of the best smugglers and blockade runners Han had ever known ... the fast, furious time he had spent working for Roa, when he had tired of trying to be just one more honest, unassuming spacer a few credits away from poverty ... It had been Roa who had taken Han on his first exhilirating, harrowing Kessel Run -- very nearly his last ....

Again as in STARS END, Chewbacca is not the only sympathetic non-human portrayed: where the first book had the felinoid Trianii, Atuarre and Pakka, the second has Spray -- a creature who turns out to be full of surprises. And in REVENGE we have another bonus: a human-type lady for Han to not only spar with (as he did with Jessa) but to travel and adventure with, and at least once help out of a jam -- though let it be said in her favor that Fiolla returns the favor. As a Lorrdian, member of a race of accomplished mimics, Fiolla derives considerable amusement from accurately parodying the mannerisms of others, both humans and non-humans, who engage her attention, Han included:

She mimicked his rangy walk , swaggering along next to him, arms dangling a bit and shoulders slumped back. There was an exaggerated sway to her hips as she swept the room arrogantly with narrowed eyes and an invisible blaster weighting her side, right in step with him.

When he noticed, he recognized himself at once. He glared around the salon in case anyone was inclined to laugh. "Will you quit that?" he said out of the side of his mouth. "Somebody's liable to call you out."

She chuckled. "Then they'll stop a blaster bolt, handsome; I've been studying with the master ... "

But, like many another lady in Solo's life -- Jessa, Leia and a legion of fan-invented types -- she has our Corellian's number and doesn't hesitate to let him know it, even in a teasing way:

"... You seem to know what you're doing in a unsubtle sort of way ... "

But once again, the great strength of REVENGE lies in its portrait of Solo himself. Mercenary, yet true to his own code of ethics; a little arrogant, yet willing to give credit where credit is due when his droids have helped to save the day; quick-tempered and sarcastic even at his own expence (*Was I born this stupid,* Han asked himself in disgust, *or am I just blossoming late in life?);* reluctant to take part in other people's difficulties, yet carrying his part through with a certain style when it becomes inevitable; daring and imaginitive pilot of anything from his *Falcon* down to a flying scooter, with the ability to calculate half a dozen variables in a split second -- yes, there is no doubt of it. From the moment we first encounter him on Kamar, jubilantly receiving from his old acquaintance Sonniod the new holocube whose showing he hopes will net him "a new stake to I can lay in a cargo and get the *Falcon* repaired" to the last pages, where his lightning reflexes and piloting skills save him first from the slavers and then from the ire of Authority, this is definitely the Han Solo from STAR WARS in all his Corellian glory. Incidentally, Daley's Chewbacca is perhaps even better delineated here than he was in the previous volume; the portraits of his first meeting with Spray and of his swift improvisation of a way to save himself when trapped by a stampede of Ammuudian grazer-beasts only help to give us a better understanding of the character and abilities of the big Wookiee who is "Han's only true friend in a very big galaxy".

It remains open to question whether Brian Daley plans any further adventures of the most famous smuggling team in this or any other galaxy. There remains the question of what befell Bollux and Blue Max between the close of the book and the events of the film; and -- considering the chronologically progressive character of the flashbacks to Han's past, that the fact that we already know that Han obtained the *Falcon* from Lando Calrissian -- there is the possibility that this might be expanded on in some future volume, or that the author might choose instead to backtrack and shed some light on Solo's childhood or perhaps give a little further insight on his abortive military career. Yet if such volumes are in fact intended, and if they can maintain the quality of these first two tales, they will certainly be well worth our money. HAN SOLO'S REVENGE is a fitting companion to HAN SOLO AT STARS END, and for the devoted Hanatic, three hours spent curled up with it an excellent means of staving off withdrawl symptoms. This is a book to be given a place of honor in everyone's STAR WARS collection.

ADDENDUM TO EDITORIAL:

Seems another apology is due. In #2 we ran a short-short called "Visit to a Small Air Force" by Jani Hicks. In typing and layout we overlooked a typo that the author felt spoiled the tone of the piece. Please be advised that Lesley's line is supposed to read, in part: " ... not trying to put me <u>in</u> hospital" NOT "... not trying to put me <u>into the</u> hospital." We inadvertently turned it from an Anglisism into an Americanism. An apology was made over the phone to the author at the time the typo was discovered, but we wish now to make one in print. Sorry, Jani.

CONFIDENCES
BY CHRIS JEFFORDS

It was a good run, a sweet run. The Falcon hummed around him, his almost-empathy with her assuring him all was well. Chewie dozed in the copilot's seat on his right, and even the chaotic vista of hyperspace seemed somehow right --

-- and then the alarm was buzzing, buzzing, grinding harsh against hearing and nerves, and he was scrambling to search for the trouble it warned of --

He woke with a jerk, realizing belatedly that it had all been a dream. It took him a fuddled moment to remember clearly where he was. The vista of his own crowded, untidy cabin was not so confusing, but ... yes, he remembered now, this was Yavin IV, the big hangar next to the fighter bay. Everything that had happened came back to him in a jumble of memory and emotion. Had it been only yesterday morning, shiptime, that he'd settled down in that cantina in Mos Eisley to brood over the money he owed Jabba and how he was to pay it back when he couldn't even afford to raise ship? And then the old man with the kid, Greedo, the Stormtroopers, the Imperial ships ... that battlestation ... gods, he still got the sweats to think about that .... the running around he'd done, the kid and his X-wing in the trench, that elongated TIE he'd knocked out of the fight ....

The buzzing continued, demanding his attention. A small blinking light on the panel by the head of the bed told him what it was . With a snarl, he levered himself up on one elbow, slammed down the master toggle and snapped into the comsystem's speaker, "Yeah, who the hell is it?"

"Han?" It was a very young voice, light and uncertain, even with the filtering effect of the system. "Did I wake you?"

"Oh, Set, no, I always sit up the whole night after thirty timeparts' dodgin' Imps and hired guns and ... What do you want, kid?" He glared at the speaker.

"Can I come aboard? I need to talk to somebody, Han and you're the only person I really know on the whole Base."

Han sat up, running a hand through his tousled hair, and squinted at the luminous face of his cabin chronometer. Three hundred, ship time -- he'd only gotten to bed around midnight, what with all the Rebels who'd insisted on buying drinks for him, and for Chewie. "I'm gonna regret this," he grumbled, not knowing he was echoing the very words of a certain overtalkative droid, no knowing, either, why he should choose to accede to the kid's request, and then he raised his voice a bit to growl into the speaker, "O.K., keep your shirt hitched, I'm comin'."

He kicked off the thermosheet and rolled slowly off the bed, wincing at the chill of the bare deck against his naked feet. One hand reached automatically for the old gray wraptunic that hung on a hook at the head of the bunk, and he flailed untidily into it as he crossed the little cabin, slapped the privacy button to disengage the doorlock and padded down the passage and across the dim main lounge of the ship, rubbing his gritty eyes with one hand and yanking the garment shut and the sashbelt into a knot with the other. At the passenger lock he punched two buttons simultaneously and the twin blast doors cycled up to reveal Luke standing on the ramp.

"Don't you ever sleep, kid?" Solo enquired rudely, and then he remembered and added, a bit more gently, "or are you still runnin' on Tatooine-time?"

"Maybe a little But I couldn't sleep even if I -- I'm sorry I woke you, Han. If Biggs hadn't -- or even if I knew Wedge a little better, or, or if Leia -- Permission to come aboard?"

Han narrowed his eyes, squinting through the gloom of the nighted hangar at the kid's face. He looked like he'd been trying to get some sleep, the Corellian considered, or at least like he needed some. He was still wearing his desert clothes, the baggy wraparound shirt and the loose pants and tape puttees, and he looked cold and tired and very, very young. "Come on up," Han invited. "Want some jaco?"

"Well, uh, I -- "

Solo ignored him. He slapped the 'shut' panel as Luke came up the ramp, then turned back into the lounge and punched up two cups from the synthesizer before opening a padded storage cabinet to pull out a bottle of rum. When he faced about with a cup in either hand -- one laced, behind the concealing shield of his body, with the dark powerful liquor -- Luke was sitting on the acceleration couch, one elbow on the chess table, cheek on fist, the other hand tracing invisible patterns across the game squares on the cool surface. Han set the rum-laced jaco down in front of the kid's nose and took a long hot slug of the straight one.

Luke sniffed suspiciously at the aromatic steam rising from the cup. "What *is* this?"

"Jaco," shrugged Solo. "Ain't you ever had any before? Spacers damn near live on it. Go on, drink it while it's hot. Ain't nothin' worse'n half-warm jaco."

Luke lifted up the cup cautiously, wrinkling his nose at the smell. Solo cocked an eyebrow at him, challenging him not to accept the *Falcon*'s hospitality. With a shrug Luke drank, rolling the hot liquid around in his mouth experimentally before he swallowed. "Hey, that's not bad!"

"What'd I tell ya." The Corellian wondered maliciously whether it was the jaco or the fiery rum that Luke was appreicating. Himself somewhat restored by the near-scalding drink, he slacked onto the couch across from Luke and leaned a little forward with his elbows on the table and one hand loosely curled around his foam cup. "O.K., kid, start talking."

"Everything's happened so fast," said Luke plaintively. "Han, do you know I'm twenty years old, and until today I'd never even been to Mos Eisley?"

"Yesterday," Han corrected automatically. "You and the old man, you chartered me ... lemme see ... late afternoon Tatooine-time, that would'a been about fifteen-twenty shiptime. We met with that damn battlestation about oh-two-ten, got off her maybe oh-five, got here about oh-six-forty ... blew her a little after oh-eight ... Yesterday, yeah. Day before, actually, it's past midnight now."

"That's what I mean," said Luke. "Twelve timeparts -- "

"Thirteen. Who the hell taught you math, kid?"

"And it was the same morning that I met Ben ... "

"How *did* you hook up with him, anyhow?" Solo inquired, honestly intrigued. If he'd ever in his entire eventful life seen a less likely quartet than a naive farmboy, a mystically-inclined hermit, and two bickering droids the occasion did not present itself to memory.

"It's kind of a long story," Luke answered shyly.

"I ain't goin' nowhere," said Han. "You said you wanted to talk, didn't you?"

Luke hesitated, then suddenly his words were pouring out of him like compressed oxy from a ruptured tank. The farm, Biggs Darklighter, Owen Lars and Beru, his years of boredom and frustration, his ambitions, his repeatedly thwarted dreams of the academy. Anchorhead. The gang. Biggs shipping out, returning the very day Luke had seen a battle in space. The older youth's talk of the Rebel Alliance, his promise that they'd meet again. The Jawas, the droids, the holo (*So that's what he meant by a 'message' back in the gantry,* Solo told himself), Artoo running off, and Threepio pursuing. The Sandpeople. Ben. His father's lightsabre. The ruined sandcrawler, the smoking holes that had been his home, the twisted blackened skeletons of the only kin he'd ever known ...

"Damn," Solo whispered when the boy's voice broke and he buried his face in his arm.

"You know the rest," Luke went on after a bit. "How we met, and what Ben told us about the Force, and what happened on the Death Star, and ... did I thank you for coming back, Han?"

"No, but forget it," said Solo. "Set, kid! And here I thought *I'd* lived a rough life -- damn, you've gotten hit with more stuff in less time than anybody I ever knew." He got up and coded up two more cups of jaco, putting about twice as much rum in Luke's this time. The kid needed it.

Luke drank with less hesitation this time, though he seemed vaguely surprised at the much-increased strength of what he probably supposed was straight jaco. "So," said Han, sliding back into his former place, "what happens now, huh?"

"I ... just don't know," said Luke, looking bewildered. "I ... I can't go back, not for a long time, anyway. I'm where I thought I always wanted to be ... I really wanted to fight the Empire, Han, I just never knew any way to do it before now. But everything's so sudden ... and my father, and Ben ... I want to be a Jedi, Han, but who's going to teach me now? I hardly even know what a Jedi is ... "

Solo's eyebrows shot up at the pleading look on the kid's face. "Don't look at *me*, kid. I know ships and blasters and smuggling, but this Force crap -- "

"It *isn't* crap!" cried Luke indignantly, his whole expression changing violently. He sat silently for a moment, staring into his rum-laced jaco. "There's one thing I haven't told you uet, Han. You remember right after Ben -- " he choked then went on, " -- how you and Leia were yelling at me to get on board?"

"Fashin' right I do," grumbled Han. "You as near as dammit gave me heart failure, standin' out there with them blaster bolts snarlin' around you."

Luke's pupils were huge, and his face slightly flushed -- though the amount of rum in his jaco could do that to anyone, Solo reflected -- "I heard Ben's voice, Han. As clearly as I hear you. He told me to run --"

Han looked skeptical but said nothing. Nobody knew better than a spacer the kind of tricks a man's mind could play on him in times of stress.

" -- And then when we took off, to attack the Death Star I mean, he was -- I heard him again. 'Luke,' he said, 'let go.'"

"Controller," said Solo, sipping his jaco. "Controller in your com-set, that's all."

"Controllers don't tell you 'Use the Force, let go,'" Luke said. "He did. In the trench, Twice. I switched off my targeting computer -- "

"Jet back," said Solo. "I picked up somethin' like that on my com, comin' in -- I was just about in range, wasn't sure if I'd heard right. You're saying you hit that vent -- *off comp?*"

"Ben was with me. He helped me get in tune with the Force, and I -- I really don't even remember letting the torpedoes go. He *was*!" Luke protested, interpreting Solo's grimace. "You think I'm crazy, don't you?"

"Hold it, kid. I didn't say anything like that."

"You thought it. What's worse -- " Luke paused, his eyes getting bigger by the second. "Han, I've been wandering all over the base, trying to think, trying to straighten it all out. And I -- I'm scared, Han, I'm

scared. Because ... because what if you're right? What if I *am* crazy? Everything that's happened to me -- Han, do you know who it was that Ben was fighting?"

"A Dark Lord," said Solo. "Me, I try not to get to know any of 'em too intimately -- it ain't healthy."

"It was Darth Vader," Luke whispered. "Leia told me, while you and Chewie were getting set to bring the ship out of hyperspace."

"The guy Kenobi said killed your dad?"

"Yeah. And he was in command of the whole operation to recover the Death Star plans, he dispatched the troopers to search for the droids. Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru ... "

And then Solo understood. " -- On account of him. And Kenobi, and your dad -- "

"And I didn't even get a chance to hit back at him!" Luke almost wailed. "Everything ... everybody I cared about ... " Suddenly he began to cry.

Han, who had not wept since he was younger than Luke was now, was uncomfortable with tears, no matter whose. Yet the boy's grief and terror, his unreasoning fears for his sanity, moved the Corellian profoundly, and he got up and went around the chess table to sit down next to the kid and put an arm around his shoulders. Luke turned blindly and put his face against the soft old fabric of Han's wraptunic, sobbing.

"That's all right, kid, that's o.k.," Solo told him softly. "Go on, let it all out. I know it hurts. Go on and cry, you'll feel a lot better." Yet behind the soothing litany of words he too felt the force of Luke's fears. The crowded events, the strains and stresses, revelations and bereavements, of the past two days would have been enough to crack a stronger man than Luke. What if the kid was right? What if he *was* going space-happy? Han suddenly realized that it mattered to him, very much, what became of Luke. He hadn't really given himself time to think of the fact before, hadn't bothered to analyse the feelings that made him turn back ... and yet -- *Kid's gettin' under your skin, ain't he, Solo?* whispered a malicious little voice in the back of his brain.

So? he snapped back at it. *Ain't I allowed to have human feelings once in a while? Ain't I allowed to .... to make a new friend?*

"Hey, kid," he said quietly, sliding a hand under Luke's chin and forcing his head up until their eyes met. "If you're crazy, so am I."

A kind of wild hope dawned in Luke's eyes. "You mean you've heard him too?"

"Oh, Sharl, no!" snapped Solo thoughtlessly -- then, seeing the shadow that came over Luke's face again, he hastened to correct the impression he'd made. "It's just that, well, you *did* say this Force stuff wasn't crap, didn't you? So look, you don't know that much about it, you admit that. So how do you know the old man didn't talk to you?"

Luke looked confused. "Do you think he did?"

Solo hesitated, reluctant to reveal his inner self -- then he knew he had to. "Hey, I know what I sound like most time ... but I've got fifteen years on you, kid, and all of them in space. A man don't work as long as I have in space without knowin' there's a khasin' hell of a lot of things in the univers that he don't understand. That maybe he never will."

There, he hadn't said he believed in the Force, or in people talking to you from the other side of death. But the kid's face lit up, and he wiped his damp face on his sleeve. *Gotta get him outta those farm clothes,* Solo told himself, *he looks like a Jawas' rag sale.* "You all right now?"

Luke nodded. "Yeah. Thanks again, Han. I guess I owe you an awful lot, don't I?" He looked around the lounge with a sort of abstractedly interested expression on his face. "What are you going to do now, Han?"

Solo peered at him suspiciously. "What's that s'posed to mean?"

"Well, you came back ... "

"Now you jet back, kid," Solo warned, lifting a hand. Just 'cause I didn't care for the odds .. I ain't a politician, kid. I'm a businessman with concerns of my own. I got no time to get mixed up with rebellions. 'Sides, I got some old debts to pay off, like I told you before. I gotta think about those before I start committin' myself to anything else, or else I ain't gonna live long enough to. Copy?"

"Then you *are* going to leave," said Luke, and he looked like somebody had just hung the *Falcon*'s reactor around his neck.

"Yeah." Solo was suddenly more uncomfortable than he cared to admit, even to himself. "Hey, look. You gotta understand about me. This thing with you and the old man, this was business. A job. A way to get the money I needed, o.k.? I came back for you, sure. I never did like loaded decks. That don't mean I give one shrill soprano yip on Illius about Jedi, or rebellions, or any damn thing else except me and Chewie and my ship."

"But we're friends, aren't we?"

"Sure we are. Chewie likes ya, too. Not that the big lug'd ever say so. And listen, just 'cause I got affairs of my own to clean up, that don't mean we ain't ever gonna see each other again. I just want you to understand, I can't make promises. 'Cause my word means a lot to me, kid. It's just about all I got, and I don't give it easy."

"Oh," said Luke in a small voice, but he nodded. "I guess I see now. When are you lifting off?"

"I dunno, exactly. I gotta find that homing beacon those Imps stuck on the *Falcon* , but that won't take long, not as well as I know this ship. Tomorrow sometime, I guess."

Luke looked secretly relieved. "Then you'll be able to come to the ceremony."

"Huh? What ceremony?"

"Didn't anyone tell you?" Luke looked honestly surprised. "We're heroes, Han, you and me and Chewie. We saved the rebellion. It wants to honor us for that."

Solo was immediately suspicious. "How?"

"Leia said something about medals -- "

"Medals!" Han exploded. "Oh, no, kid. No way! I ain't gettin' up in front of no bunch of total strangers and -- "

"I was a total stranger, not too long ago," Luke interrupted. "Anyhow -- " he yawned suddenly and blinked, "-- you have to come. I already promised I'd bring you."

"You *promised?*" screeched Solo. "You promised *my* time? Damn you, kid, I'll break your -- "

Luke yawned and suddenly slumped. Solo, who'd jumped to his feet in righteous indignation, barely reached out in time to keep him from falling to the deck.

"Oh hell," the Corellian growled. "Too much rum and too little sleep. Kid, you -- "

Luke mumbled indistinctly and gave a long snore.

"Set," Han swore. With a grunt, he hauled Luke off the couch and into his arms. "Can't just let you lie there," he grumbled. "At least we got a couple spare cabins on this bird."

Silence closed about the lounge as the Corellian carried his new young friend off to bed. Silence ... except for the inaudible chuckle of an old man ... somewhere ...

MOTIVES

Neither Empire built by madmen
Nor rebellion brave and bold
Can put boundaries on his spirit
Or a limit on his hold.

For Han Solo flies the morning
All authority defied
In the Falcon, bound for freedom,
With a Wookiee by his side.

Neither Royal proposition
Nor the solemn Jedi bond
Can restrain this wanton rambler
From his destiny beyond.

For Han Solo flies the morning
With no star to him denied
In the Falcon, bound for freedom,
With a Wookiee by his side.

Cry of profit, lure of danger
Are the motives he'll afford
Future peace and shining glory
Are no smuggler's sane award.

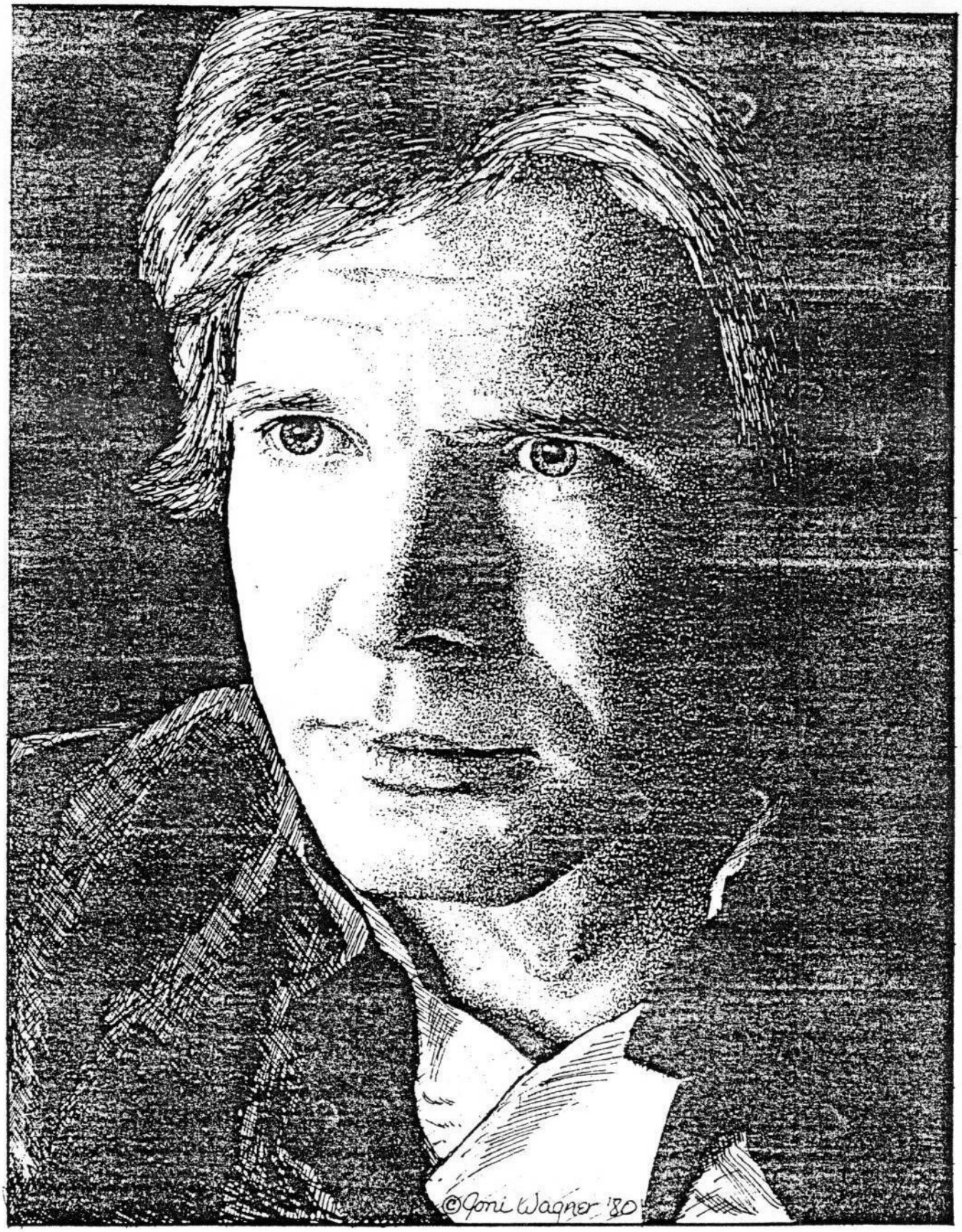
For Han Solo flies the morning
No allegiance to be tried.
In the Falcon, bound for freedom,
With a Wookiee by his side.

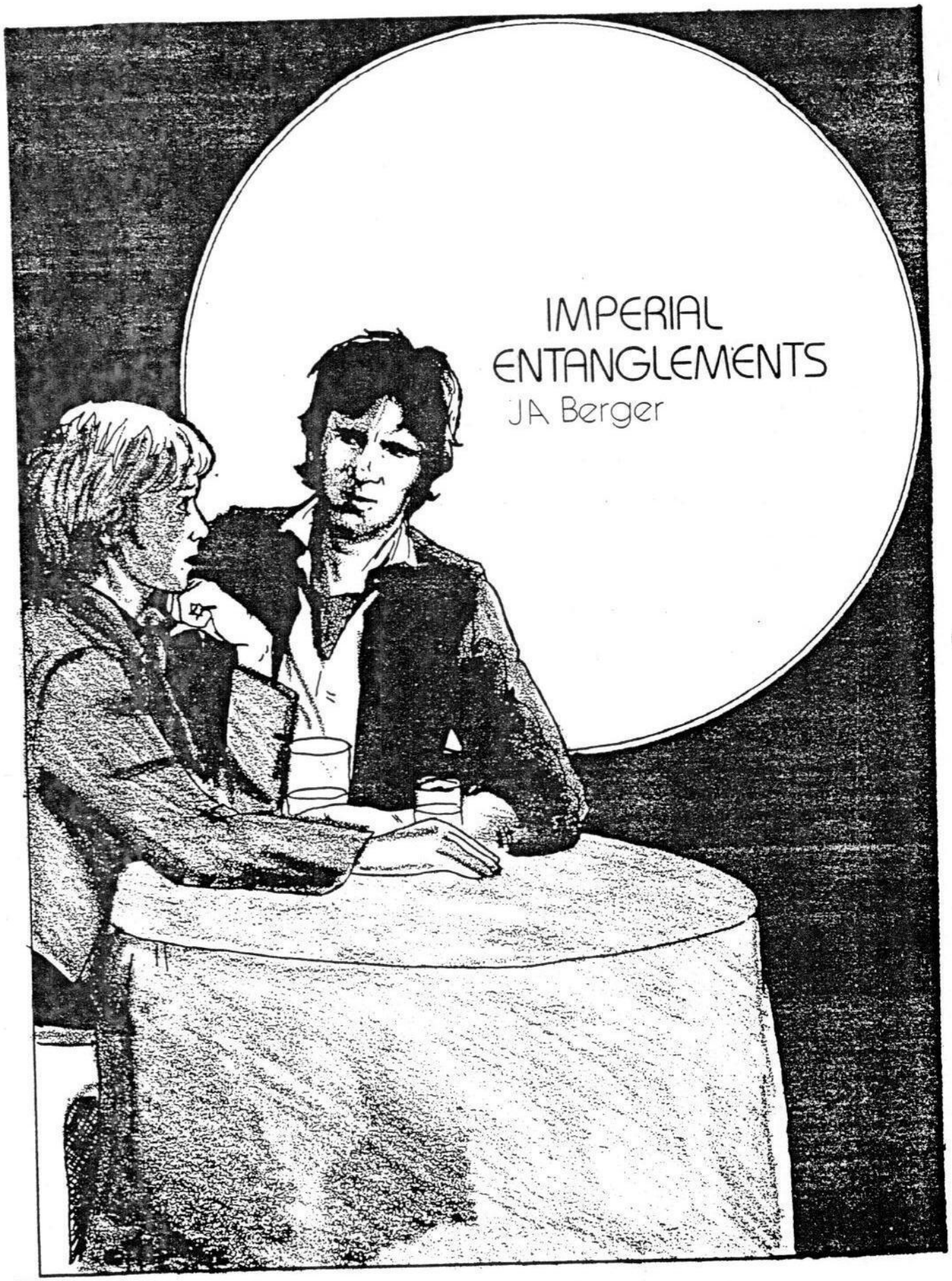
So with force don't seek to hold him
Nor his favors try to earn
Rather give him leave to wander
And for friendship he'll return.

For Han Solo flies the morning
Lady Fortune as his guide
In the Falcon, bound for freedom,
With a Wookiee by his side.

by

MARTYN N.


©Joni Wagner '80


IMPERIAL
ENTANGLEMENTS
JA Berger

Luke Skywalker was bored. It was a condition he shared, along with a drink, with the tall arrogant Corellian across the table from him.

"It's been three days! How much longer are they gonna keep us grounded?"

"You asked me that five minutes ago," Solo snapped irritably. He pushed his glass aside. "And I'll give you the same answer I did then -- I don't know."

A small, muffled beep sent Han's hand to his pocket. He pulled out the comlink and activated it. He listened intently to the soft, muted bark,his brows knitted in concentrated thought. "You're sure?"

The comlink woofed, and he nodded. "Okay, okay, yeah, that's kind of how I have it figured. But not before 0200?"

"What is it?" Luke put down his drink and studied the handsome features of his friend, who held up a hand silencing him until the transmission was completed. He pocketed the small electronic device.

"Chewie's tracked down an official at planetary defenses. We're cooling our heels here while an Imperial entourage tours this sector. That's kind of what I suspected, it's happened to us before."

"They're making a grand tour, and they ground everything in the sector?" A look of disbelief touched the young rebel's face.

"Luke, we're practically in the Emperor's back yard." Solo glanced around as if expecting the royal personage to suddenly materialize at the mention of his name. "They do this anytime a member of the royal family travels. Fortunately for my kind of business, they don't range too far from home. Chewie and I tend to handle our business a little farther from Imperial headquaters than this."

"So how much longer do we have to wait?"

"According to Chewie, there's a tentative time set for 0200 unless something happens to upset it."

Luke glanced suspiciously at the Corellian. We're actually going to get out of here before morning?"

"Luke," Solo picked up his glass and took a drink, "I can't promise it. But the *Falcon* is loaded; all we have to do is get clearance and we can leave. I'm not going to make any waves. We can't afford to have my hold checked. You're just gonna have to be patient."

"Coming from you, that's quite a statement," Luke grumbled. "It's just that -- well -- I wanted to get back before Leia left."

A look of interest touched Solo's hazel eyes. "That's right, she did have something in the works. What was it anyway, did she say?"

"No," Luke admitted. "It was pretty hushed up. She wouldn't talk to me about it, just said that if we got back in time she'd likely work us in."

"Well, forget it, 'cause we're already three days behind schedule. If I know her Royalness, that's at least two days past *her* deadline. She's one damned impatient woman when she gets her mind made up to tackle something."

The two men fell silent, the only silence that surrounded the busy activity of the drinking establishment.

"Why don't we get something to eat? Otherwise, it's the ship's processor later," Luke ventured halfheartedly.

"Nah, I'm not hungry."

Several men shouldered into the crowded bar. The Corellian stiffened in recognition, unaware of Skywalker's close scrutiny. "What is it?" Luke asked.

"Those men who just came in -- "

Luke glanced around the room, watched the half-tipsy group secure drinks and find seat at a table only a short way from them. "What about them?"

"Do you recognize the uniforms?"

"No." Luke glanced over Solo's shoulder at the men. They were dressed in royal blue trousers, expensive white shirts of a silk-like fabric, smartly tailored with full sleeves which tapered to tight cuffs at the wrists. Around their waists they wore white sashes, over which were buckled holstered blasters.

"I wouldn't call them uniforms," Luke frowned, "more like costumes."

"Don't let those duds fool you," Solo cautioned. "Those men will be more than capable defending their right to wear them."

"Who are they?"

"Members of the Royal Guard." Solo chuckled at the surprise that crossed the young Jedi's face.

"What? Are you sure?"

"Yeah, I'm sure."

"How ... "

Solo took another sip from his glass. "I had a friend once who thought the sun rose and set in the royal house. She knew everything there was to know about the royal family. She had high Imperial hopes of becoming a part of it someday."

"Did she?"

Solo grinned thoughtfully. "Well, she may not have had the blue blood, but I sure couldn't fault her other attributes." He shook his head free of obviously fond memories. "Last time I saw her she was still dreaming royal dreams. I didn't fit into those plans. " Solo sighed. "We did have some good times."

"I'll bet."

The lopsided grin touched the Corellian's mouth. "You know what this means, don't you?"

Luke glanced again at the crowded table. "What?"

"That we probably ain't gonna lift off at 0200."

"Why not?" Agitation shifted Luke's attention back to the amused Corellian.

"Because," Han explained patiently, "the royal guard protects the immediate family of the Emperor. Where the Emperor goes, they go."

"You mean the Emperor, himself, is travelling in ths sector?" Luke groaned in understanding. "We'll never get off this rock!"

Solo chuckled at Luke's vexation. "What's wrong, kid, I thought you liked rubbing shoulders with royalty." A teasing light flickered in the hazel eyes. "As much time as you spend with Leia."

"Han, what are we going to do around here waiting for the Emperor to decide to go home?"

The smile disappeared and Solo frowned. "Yeah, I know what you men." A strange expression touched Solo's features. He looked again at the four men across from them, back at his friend, and toyed with his glass thoughtfully.

"Han?" Luke studied the Corellian with growin suspicion. "I've got an uneasy feeling you've thought of something. Do I want to know about it?"

"What would you say," Han eyed him closely, "if I told you I know most of the general plans of the royal flagship, guard placements, most of the routines, and procedures on these intergalactic tours?"

"I'd say you had some interesting information. Really worthwhile, if I were ever to be a guest of the Emperor."

"Luke, I'm serious. Think about it."

"You're crazy." Luke glanced at the four men speculatively.

"Am I?"

"You're not thinking what I think you're thinking?" Luke grinned in fascination. "You are!"

"Keep your voice down!" Han warned. He leaned forward. "This is an opportunity we can't pass up. Besides," he smiled, "it won't be boring."

"It's crazy," Luke repeated, but his voice betrayed his excitement.

"So was breaking into the detention area of the Death Star. As I recall, that was your idea."

"But I had a plan," Luke ventured. "And we did have some help getting out, remember?"

"I think I can come up with a plan." Solo pulled out the comlink and flipped it open. "Chewie?" He waited until a muffled whoof acknowledged the opened channel. "Luke and I have an appointment in a few minutes. I'll check in with you when we get there. Don't try to get in touch with us." He quickly deactivated the device and slipped it away.

"You didn't give him much of a chance to discuss this decision of ours."

"He's a worry wart. He'd have wasted our time. Come on."

Luke shivered as the night air hit them, and they moved into the darkness of the alley. "We can't tackle all four of them. And someone on their shuttle is sure to miss them."

"My, we're negative tonight," Solo mumbled under his breath. "Where did you think I went before we came out here?"

"I saw you at the communications -- "

"I was doing a little checking. I have a couple of old business acquaintances who were always banks of Imperial information," Solo explained. "There are three contingents off that flagship tonight, from several branches of their services. They're set to lift off at -- " he checked his chronometer, " -- about an hour from now." The flagship will stay in orbit until 0100, that's when they're set to move out of planetary influence."

"So, that many down here, from different services -- "

"Aren't likely to know everyone -- " Solo finished for him. "Under a heavy stun, there's no way they're gonna make the 0100 lift off."

Luke slowly shook his head. "You really think we can carry this off?

"Why not?"

"I can think of several good reasons," Luke admitted. "But, why not? Just one question."

"Shoot."

"I assume you've got the plans for that ship above us from this friend of yours you mentioned earlier. I'm sure she was a wealth of information of the sort we need, but how well did you listen?"

"I'm a quick study," Solo chuckled at Luke's discomfort. "I got a great deal of continued exposure. Don't worry, I'll get us on."

"I'm more worried about getting us off!"

Luke pulled unconsciously at the white sash around his waist.

"Will you relax," Solo hissed. They moved toward the Imperial shuttle that stood warming on the curtained-off apron of the air strip. "You look fine. Just loosen up!"

"I feel lik a fool in this get-up," the blond man complained as he lengthened his stride to match Solo's. "Why doesn't the Empire recruit shorter men? I'm always in a uniform two sizes too big." Luke shot an admiring look at the Corellian at his side. "It wouldn't be so bad if I looked like you do in one."

"Well, we can't all have my dashing good looks."

"If I'm caught in this get-up I'll never forgive myself," Luke promised.

"And you were the one complaining about being bored," Solo reminded him teasingly. "You remember what to do?" he questioned as they neared the crowd before the shuttle.

"It's too easy, it won't work."

"It'll work, trust me."

Luke's step faltered as they joined the line of loading personnel. He staggered then leaned heavily against Solo. Han put an arm around the boy and they moved toward the hatch. An officer checked their stolen identification papers, and motioned them aboard.

Solo found a seat to the back of the shuttle and eased Luke down, dimmed the illumination over their seats to discourage conversation. He slumped gratefully against the Jedi in pretended weariness. His senses were keyed to every movement about them. His right hand, seemingly relaxed, rested on the butt of his holstered blaster.

It seemed an eternity before the shuttle bumped under them, announcing their docking to the mother, ship. Han got up. He wrestled Luke into the thick of the disembarking crowd. He saluted the officer, following the line of men into the corridors leading to the personnel quarters. He slowed, then fell back until they were alone. He stopped in a side corridor.

"Okay, all clear."

Luke straightened, looking around. He got his first glance at the corridor in which they stood. "Han, this ship's the size of a small city!"

"About, I guess," Solo agreed, concern touching his voice as he pulled out the comlink. "Come on, there should be some supply holds down this way." He found a door and activated it. "Relax -- this is ship's night. They are on skeleton crews."

"How are we gonna get off?"

"If this doesn't work, we won't," Solo stated simply.

"I was afraid you were going to say something like that."

"Then don't ask," Solo smiled. "You remember the layout I gave you in case we get separated?"

"Seems simple enough," Luke admitted grudgingly. "I just never pictured her being this big."

Han activated the comlink. "Chewie, do you read?"

"Won't they pick up that transmission?" Luke questioned.

"Not if it's short. It'll be over before they can spot it. These comlinks are almost too small to show on sensors, but I'll have to keep Chewie's conversation short. The *Falcon*'s gain is too powerful -- " Solo halted as he heard the click of the opened channel. "Don't say anything, Gruesome, just listen. Luke and I are aboard the Imperial flagship above you ... "

A roar sounded over the small device. Solo's features hardened. "We *will* if you don't shut up! She's scheduled to leave orbit at 0100 . I want you on an intercept course as soon as you can get off that rock. She's headed back to Imperial headquarters. Pace her and keep all channels open to this link. We'll keep you posted as things develop. And no improvising, chum," Solo warned. "You wait until you hear from me. If you don't hear anything by 0300 head for home."

Solo deactivated the comlink, recognized the question on Luke's face and groaned, "He's a little upset."

"I'll bet," Luke mumbled softly. "What now?"

"If Shayla's timetable is still accurate, his ultimate royalness will be in some kind of debriefing between now and lift off at 0100 -- setting up tour schedules, defenses and timetables for the next stopover. At lift off he'll go back to his chambers. That's where we'll have our best chance to nab him."

"I don't remember you mentioning his quarters when we were going over the layout."

"I didn't mention it because I don't know where it is," Solo admitted, then held up a quick hand to silence the angry retort he knew was coming. "We've got plenty of time to locate it before lift off. I know where the royal suites are."

"Okay then, it shouldn't be difficult," Luke mumbled in obvious apprehension. "How much trouble are we gonna have wandering round here?"

"If you act like you know where you're going and are late getting there, you shouldn't have any trouble. You got an officer's uniform. There's only a couple people you answer to directly." Solo grinned and pointed to the insignia sewn on his shoulder. "Me, and the Emperor." He shrugged. "Just stay out of any royal bedrooms and keep your hands off the royal consorts and you'll be fine."

Luke groaned at Solo's teasing jabs. "If I didn't know better, I'd say you were enjoying all this."

"It beats what we've been doing for the last three days," Solo admitted as he opened the door and they re-entered the deserted corridor. "Down this way and to the left -- "

"Are the conference and throne rooms, I remember to the right and down for two levels are all the personnel quarters."

"Right," Solo nodded. "On this level is the servants' quarters. Now right above us are the royal suites."

Solo took a right and they entered an open lift. He programmed it upwards. "To starboard's the officers' quarters for the Royal Guard. Stay away from that area," he warned, "it's the one place you might be questioned."

"All we have to do now is find the royal bedchambers on the port side of level four, which should only take a couple of days," Luke remarked sarcastically.

"There's two of us," Solo remarked cheerfully. "Should cut the time in half. Come on."

"What about the life pods?" Luke asked as he followed Han out of the lift.

"They'll be located near the Emperor's quarters."

Luke shook his head in disbelief. "I take it all back, Han. You did listen."

"Of course. I always enjoyed the homework."

"I'd love to meet the teacher sometime."

"Han!" The soft voice stopped both men in their tracks, as footsteps sounded behind him. "Han Solo, is that you?"

"You may get your chance," Solo groaned. He turned to face the beautifully dressed woman advancing toward them, her face alight with pleased recognition.

"You handsome devil, it is you!" She swept eagerly into his arms, as beautifully sculptured hands pulled the Corellian's head down and sensuous lips found his.

Solo tensed momentarily then gave in to the passionate welcome. His arms willingly encircled the slender waist, his eyes sweeping Luke with a 'what could I do?' look as he returned the kiss.

Luke looked worriedly down the quiet corridors, as he attempted to look at ease before the two embracing figures. He failed miserably. "Han ... "

The woman released Solo and took a step backward, her hands holding his. She studied him with obvious pleasure. "I'd forgotten how good-looking you are, you Corellian rogue."

"Han?" Luke glaced again down the corridors, then hesitated as he became aware of beautiful violet eyes studying him with interest.

"Who's your friend? He's sure an improvement over the Wookiee," she teased lightly. Color mounted in the young rebel's cheeks. "He's cute."

"Luke, this is Shayla." He turned her away from the young Jedi. "We were just talking about you."

"After all this time? I'm flattered. I always assumed I was forgotten as soon as the *Falcon* shook Malas' soil from her landing gear." An amused but contemplating light flickered in her eyes. "You do wonders for that uniform. I always suspected it was an injustice to keep Corellians out of the services. Even if they don't know how to take anyone's orders but their own," she teased as her lips brushed his again lightly. "And your friend's a little too short and a lot too young for the rank he's wearing. You're up to no good, Han Solo."

"Why don't we go somewhere and discuss my dishonest ways?" Han whispered as he kissed her more alluringly.

"My thoughts exactly," she replied, her voice husky with anticipation. "What about your young friend?"

"He's got places to go, people to see," Han stated, his eyes meeting Luke's over the head of his enraptured companion. "Right?"

"Where'll we meet?"

"Shayla?"

"My quarters are at the end of this corridor, you can't miss them."

"You meet me there in one hour," Han told Luke. "We have an important appointment at 0100."

"Can I see you a minute?" Luke asked, nettled.

Han released himself from the woman's clinches, met her amused smile and excused himself. He and Luke moved away a step or two. The younger man turned his back on the beautiful vision who continued to smile. "Aren't you forgetting some advice you gave me earlier?" Luke hissed in mounting irritation. "This section of the ship is massive! I can't do all the searching alone. And we've got less than an hour before lift off."

Han winked at Shayla over the young Jedi's head. "You worry too much. Shayla's not dressed as a servant, so I figured she's a paid companion to one of the Emperor's consorts." Han sighed with mounting eagerness, "Give me an hour with her and if you haven't found the royal chambers, I'll have the information from her."

Luke threw a wary glance from the woman to his enraptured friend. "I hope you know what you're doing."

"I do. Oh, I do," Han sighed softly.

"You'd better," Luke whispered curtly, then gave in. "Okay, I'll meet you at Shayla's quarters just before 0100."

"Sure, kid." Solo pulled his attention away from the alluring violet eyes and glanced at the blond youth. If you find what we're looking for keep an eye peeled, and don't walk into any trouble."

"That's good advice. I'll follow it if you will." Luke looked again at Solo's elegant companion. He drew a deep breath and backed down the corridor away from them.

Shayla moved eagerly into the Corellian's arms. They moved down the corridor. He's really cute, Han. Where did you pick him up?"

"He's a farmboy from Tatooine, out to see the galaxy."

"Oh, he'll see it, shipping out with you."

Han looked uneasily down the empty corridors. "Where is everyone?"

"Relax. We have the wing to ourselves," she chuckled pleasantly at Solo's concern. "The Emperor's traveling light this trip. It's a business trip and sort of a honeymoon for him and a favored consort. Except for her companions and servants there are no others in this wing."

Shayla paused before a suite and palm activated the huge double doors. "With the royal guard moved to the adjoining wing, htere's no need for guards stationed outside doors, although it's still standard practice when the family travels into unfamiliar or hostile systems."

The door slid noiselessly open and she escorted the hesitant Corellian into her quarters. The doors closed behind them. Solo watched them somewhat amused, turned and surveyed his surroundings. The suite was of a royal excellence that left him speechless.

"You like it? Shayla turned and moved into a close embrace.

"Like you better," Solo murmured, his lips finding her as he pulled her closer. Small gentle fingers slowly unbuttoned the white shirt and he felt a warm hand on his chest.

She sighed in contentment as the kiss ended and snuggled against him. "Han it's been so damned long."

"Umm," Solo mumbled as he ran gentle loving hands up her back. "It looks like your dreams came true. Are you happy?"

She pulled away far enough to look into the hazel eyes. "Yes, I was -- until you reminded me of what we had," she admitted. "But I wouldn't go back. This -- " she glanced around the expensive decor or her suite, " -- even without you is much, much better than Malas when you decided to stop by."

Shayla pushed her face into his chest. "And someday, my handosme rogue, you're going to get yourself killed playing your dangerous games. I would have nothing but Malas -- and that is nothing at all." She turned her face up to him, closed her eyes and offered her lips again. He met them gnetly, tenderly as she pressed urgently against him. This time he drew away. His passions were rising faster than his common sense. He had forgotten how much she had once gotten under his skin.

"How about a drink for old times' sake, Shayla?"

"Of course; I'm forgetting my manners," she smiled, as gentle fingers outlined a pattern on his bared chest. "You know, I used to think a lot about this marking when we were apart. It's a Corellian falcon, isn't it? I always thought how appropriate it was that you bore it. You are a wild, reckless and unshackled as the falcon which has never been successfully in captivity." She moved away from him and reached for a button on the headboard of the gigantic pedestalled bed. He followed her stopping her hand as she touched a small device.

"I'm calling my maid. Give me a chance to show you how well I fit into these surroundings. You needn't worry while you're here. The servants are all expertly trained to keep their mouths shut."

"Or the Emperor shuts them permanently," Solo stated. He released her hand and she pressed the button.

"Something like that, I guess," she smiled. "I never inquired. But whatever is done, it is very effective."

Solo heard the door behind him swish open and stiffened. Shayla chuckled as she moved into his arms again. "Relax, your true colors are showing. Leanna, would you please pour a couple of glasses of -- " she paused as wide violet eyes met amused hazel ones, " -- Malasian brandy?" He nodded. "Two brandies, Leanna, a double for my guest."

"Yes, ma'am." A soft, barely audible voice answered her, and Solo heard crystal glasses clink, liquid splashing into them. Soft footsteps sounded behind him. He released Shayla reluctantly and turned.

A gasp of unrestrained surprise came from the small maid, as the tray of drinks crashed to the floor. The startled brown eyes of Leia Organa met and clashed with the amused hazel ones of Han Solo.

"Leanna, what were you thinking of?" Shayla exclaimed in barely controlled anger. She watched the spilled liquid soak into the plush floor covering. "Quickly, get something and clean up this mess. At once, before the carpet is past saving!"

Shayla groaned as she saw the spots of brandy that had splashed on the hem of her skirts. "My robes are ruined."

"I'm sure it was an accident," Solo soothed her softly. His eyes settled with roguish pleasure on the beautifully clear features of Leia Organa who was quickly trying to gain her composure again. "Servants are prone to clumsiness. She probably tripped.

Leia knelt, picked up the tray and glasses, paused at his words and shot him a murderous glance.

"Hurry, Leanna, lay out my evening robes. I'll step out of this. You will see they are properly cleaned before you retire tonight."

"Yes, ma'am," Leia whispered as she hurried to the small doorway off the bedchamber. She returned quickly with several wet towls, knelt before the stained carpeting and scrubbed angrily at the wet spot, her enraged gaze averted from the Corellian. Solo wondered if she was wishing it was him she had under her small efficient hands. His smile broadened.

"Han, your boots!" Shayla pulled his attention to his badly spattered footwear. "If you leave here like that you could be stopped for improper uniform code." Solo's eyes danced with a growing temptation.

As Shayla moved into his arms he again met the passionate kiss of the beautiful woman. "Why don't you change and I'll have Leanna take these boots to be cleaned and polished before I leave," he suggested.

Shayla pulled reluctantly away from the tall Corellian, her hand pausing momentarily on his bared chest. She moved away with a warm promising smile. Only Solo was aware of the deadly gaze that watched them. A silence fell as both hazel and brown eyes followed Shayla from the room. The door remained alluringly open.

Solo moved a step backward and found he could see shayla disrobing. A warm smile from the full length mirror told she was aware of his eyes.

"Han Solo, what are you doing here?" The voice was clipped with barely suppressed anger.

Solo sat down on the edge of the large bed, aware of the scene they made, with the small Alderaanian kneeling before him. He smiled, liking the illusion. "Leanna, is it?" Han spoke loudly enough to insure it reaching Shayla. "Would you help me get these boots off?"

"You know where you can -- "

Solo tilted his head in warning and glanced over his shoulder, smiling at the half-clad figure in the mirror. Leia groaned and slowly stood up. With her every move telegraphing her fury she halted before the amused Corellian. She reached down, angrily grabbed the offered boot and wrenched savagely at it. It remained tight. The color rose in her cheeks and she refused to look up. She tugged again.

"If I might make a suggestion, Leanna," Solo grinned wickedly. "Turn around and straddle my foot. You'll get better leverage."

"No way am I -- "

Solo put a finger to his lips nodding toward the open door. Leia swore under her breath, her eyes dancing with barely controlled fury. She turned wordlessly, straddled Solo's leg and grasped the boot once again. She tugged. There was a driving force against her well rounded bottom and she and the boot parted company with the Corellian. She came up with a killing fury in her brown eyes, the boot held as a weapon, to face the seated spacer. He cleared his throat and Leia dropped the boot as Shayla entered the room.

"I'm sorry, Leanna," Solo apologized. "The other one comes off much easier."

"Leanna, get on with it. I want you done and out of here in five minutes."

"Yes, ma'am," Leia mumbled, dropping her eyes from the angry woman as she attempted to control her own anger. She grabbed the boot and pulled. Solo had been right, it came off easily. Too easily. She sat down, hard, and shot him a devastating look as Shayla moved again into his arms and his lap. "I'll get you for that," she mouthed soundlessly at him.

Solo smiled benignly over Shayla's snuggling head. Leia picked up the soiled boots and disappeared into the vacated powder room, and again the door remained suspiciously open.

Solo eased Shayla willingly onto the bed, his lips again finding hers. The door slammed shut.

"That girl!" Shayla swore as Colo reclined comfortably beside her. "I don't know what's gotten into her. Would you still like that drink?"

"Yes," Solo whispered. She got up and crossed to the open bar and poured two glasses. She returned to the bed. Han too the offered drink, propped himself onto and elbow as Shayla sat down on the edge of the bed beside him. Her fingers again entwined themselves in the dark hair of his chest. "This isn't going quite like we'd planned."

"No,' he admitted softly. "It's not."

"What're you up to, Han Solo?" an amused light flickered in Shayla's violet eyes.

"Do you really care?" Han fenced warily.

"I do, if it's going to upset what I've got here."

Solo shrugged, "I don't think it will." He smiled. "As long as you pretend you don't know me if I get caught."

"You can bet on it," she agreed readily, her eyes hardening. "I like living."

"And I thought you cared, Shayla."

"I do," she touched gentle lips to the base of the Corellian's throat. "Almost as much as I care for me."

"Spoken like a true Malian," Solo whispered. "No wonder your race is so often confused with mine." He returned the intimate kiss. "I bet you have every man on this barge panting at your door."

"Only one." she confessed knowingly.

"He must be something," Solo teased as he traced the low cut front of her robes with his finger.

"Oh, he doesn't measure up to you," Shayla admitted, covering his hand with hers. "But my future is more stable with him." She leaned down and they kissed. A door behind them swished open and, with a soft groan, they parted.

"Are you finished, Leanna?"

"Yes, ma'am. Here are the Captain's boots," Leia dropped them unceremoniously at the side of the bed, her eyes avoiding the Corellian, whose hand still rested on Shayla's ample cleavage. "I have your robes to be cleaned. May I be excused?" She looked up, noticed Han's hand. Uncontrolled color mounted in her otherwise pale features.

"Yes, yes, please go. I won't need you again until morning."

"But what if his--?"

"That's enough, Leanna," Shayla snapped curtly, dismissing the uneasy girl. "It's nothing you need concern yourself with."

"No, ma'am," Leia turned. "It sure isn't." She let herself out, manually slamming the door behind her.

Luke stepped into the empty corridors, his hand reaching for the close release button, when activity from the lift a short ways from him drew him back into the protection of the empty rooms. Manually he closed the door until he could see the group of men who had stopped before the conveyance. He stiffened in recognition, his hand on the hilt of the silver tube at his weapon's belt.

Six men stood before the closed lift doors. Three were heavily armed royal guardsmen, the other three he recognized as being Alliance personnel. Two were in Imperial uniforms and securely bound -- the third man was Silas Talason, an Alliance intelligence agent.

Luke frowned as Talason savagely backhanded one of the bound men to the floor, then kicked the man before he could gain his feet. Luke had never liked Talason, because of the rage the man seemed barely able to control. Now, he longed to get his hands on the older man and have five minutes alone with him.

"Take them to the detention area and show them what we do with spies. I will report to the Emperor that all is proceeding as planned."

The highest ranking gardsman saluted Talason and followed the others into the lift with the prisoners. Luke groaned. Things were getting too complicated. He had to findout what was going on before he could let Talason out of his reach. And he still hadn't located the Emperor's elusive quarters. He was running out of time. He drew a deep breath and made his decision. Talason reached for the lift button that would take him to the third level. Luke closed his eyes and projected toward the reaching hand. It stayed just short of the control. He unbuckled the sabre and moved into the corridor, his eyes focused on the tall figure. "Talason."

Silas Talason whirled at the soft spoken voice, his hand moving toward the blaster holstered at his side.

"You don't want to draw on me," Luke's voiced as a practiced finger activated the ancient weapon in his hand.

"Skywalker!" Talason's hand moved away from the blaster as uneasy eyes settled on the suddenly mature features of the boy. "What are you doing here?"

"I was about to ask the same question."

"We can't stand here," Talason snapped. "You'll blow my cover. I'm here on special assignment."

"I noticed," Luke commented, his voice unemotional as he held the sabre easily at his side. "But for whom, Talason? The Alliance or the Empire?"

"I'm undercover, you know how I work."

"No, I thought I knew." The sabre raised slightly as Luke's blue eyes locked onto the uneasiness of the man before him. "Now you're going to tell me."

Talason relaxed. "Sure. We slipped aboard in the Dalas system. The Princess had learned new Imperial personnel were to come aboard. We took their places. It was simple. I'm - working - as - a - double - agent -- " Talason's eyes widened in surprised horror. *Why did I say that?* He hurried to cover his mistake. The boy's expression remained unchanged, his eyes reflecting a strange blankness.

"I mean, I knew an Imperial agent here. I slipped into his place. I've - been - in - the - Emperor's - employment - for - two - years - since - before - the - destruction - of - Alderaan." Talason groaned and fell silent before the slowly advancing youth, afraid to say more, the fear in his eyes increasing as the young Jedi reached him. "What are you going to do?"

Luke smiled. It wasn't reflected in his eyes. "What happened to our two men who just left here?"

"Forget them," Talason said uneasily. "It's already too late for them. The guardsmen had orders to shoot them and airlock the bodies."

"And the Princess? Has she been taken?"

"Not yet. The Emperor arranged to have her taken when she returned to her quarters. He's to see to it personally. She won't be harmed," Talason assured the Jedi. "He wishes to question her himself."

Talason raised his voice as he saw two guardsmen walking toward the lifts. The boy remained unconcerned before him. "Guards! Take him! He's an Alliance spy!"

The two men paused in surprise before the agitated human and the boy in uniform, armed with the strange weapon. Their hands moved toward holstered blasters.

"You won't need your weapons," Luke stated simply. A gentle smile pulled at his lips as he settled his attention on the two men. "He won't give you any trouble. One of you take his blaster."

"Yes, sir." And Talason was disarmed.

"You fools! Look at him! He's too young to be of the rank he's wearing!"

"What of the other spies?" Luke asked softly.

"They've been taken care of. We've just received word to clear the corridors about the servants' level so that the young woman may be taken unharmed."

"Where will she be held?"

"In her quarters, until we get orders from the Emperor."

"Can't you see what he's doing?" Talason raged. Neither guardsman looked his way.

"This man is a top Alliance spy," Luke explained. "I want him taken to the detention area."

"He will be taken to the detention area," the officer repeated.

"And the Emperor's orders will be followed."

"The Emperor's orders will be followed."

"No!" Talason shouted as he backed away, realizing the trap he'd fallen into. "Look at him, dammit! He's no guardsman!"

"Carry on," Luke commanded His eyes touched Talason's and the double agent shivered under the coldness he read in the blue eyes.

"Yes, sir."

Luke watched the lift doors open. "Sergeant?"

"Yes, sir?"

"Will the Emperor return to his quarters after the woman has been taken?"

"Yes, sir. He always returns to his quarters at lift off."

"Where are those quarters?"

"At the far end of the corridor leading from the Royal Suites, sir."

Luke smiled. "Carry on. You will not remember seeing me nor will you remember anything except following your Emperor's orders."

"Yes, sir." The two men saluted smartly.

Luke watched the lift doors close. The conveyance started its rapid descent to the detention center and the unpleasant death that awaited the double agent. He deactivated the sabre and returned it to his belt. "A companion to his consort, he says -- " He swore under his breath as he turned and quickened his step.

He reached the double doors of the suite, knocked briefly then activated the door-open control. Luke entered, a smile momentarily touching his lips as a scurry of activity accompanied the swish of the closing door.

Shayla swore under her breath as she took a step away from the bed and the comfortably reclining Corellian. "He's a friend of yours, all right -- he has the same manners."

"I'm sorry," Luke grinned helplessly under the woman's anger. He glanced worriedly at the doors then at the amused spacer. "Han, get up, we've only got a few minutes."

Solo laughed at Luke's discomfort, sat up and slowly buttoned his shirt. "Settle down, we've got time."

"Han, don't you know where you're at?"

The Corellian stomped his foot into a boot and looked up in puzzlement. "Huh?"

Luke groaned. "You're in the Emperor's quarters, settling on the Emperor's bed, and doing -- who knows what -- with the Emperor's -- "

"What?!" Solo got to his feet, hazel eyes flashing as he moved threateningly toward the young woman. "Shayla, is that true?"

Shayla took a step backwards, shifting her gaze from the advancing spacers to the uneasy youth beside him. "Now, Han, take it easy. You're getting upset -- "

"Yes, I'm getting upset!" Solo snapped. "Why the hell didn't you tell me?"

"You didn't ask. Besides, I know you and your hard-headed Corellian pride. I was willing to take the chance. You might not have."

©1980 PAULS

"Han, he's going to be here any minute."

Shayla's eyes darkened with suspicion. "What are you two up to?"

Luke glanced at Solo, but remained silent as he recognized the fear in the woman's eyes.

"We're going to take your boy friend for a ride," Han snapped sarcastically.

"Han, you can't!" Shayla pleaded. If he thinks I'm a party to all this, he'll have me killed. Please, you know how much this means to me."

"Han," Luke caught the Corellian's attention, "she's right."

"I know she is, damn it!" Solo swore in frustration. "I'm sorry, Shayla, we'll try to keep you out of it -- "

"And just ruin my life!"

"Better than dying, isn't it?"

"We don't have time for this." Luke told the Corellian briefly about Leia and her dangerously foiled plans. The smuggler swore hotly.

"I knew she'd find some way to screw this up when I saw her."

"You saw her, here?"

"Yeah, she's posing as a servant of Shayla's. She came in a while ago -- "

"They have her -- "

"Leanna?" Shayla asked as suspicion turned to anger. "You knew her! That's why she was acting so strangely!"

Solo ignored her. "She's the only one alive from her party?"

"Yes."

"How many women of yours are on this ship?" Shayla snapped.

"Shut up, Shayla," Solo said sweetly. "Okay, Luke, things have gotten a little complicated, but I don't see any real problems. We're still where we wanted to be in time for what we planned."

"But Leia -- we can't leave her."

"Of course not. But one thing at a time. First the Emperor, then the Princess."

"Princess?"

"Don't let it worry you, Shayla," Han soothed. "You have the royal position and the ultimate Royalness himself. Leia has the royal blue blood. There the similarities between you ends. You wouldn't get along."

Shayla lifted her chin in determination. "What about me? Are you just going to let the Emperor walk in here and find me with two outlaws --"

Solo's eyes softened. "No, for old times' sake, I wouldn't do that, Shayla. If this works, you may come out of this am Imperial heroine."

"Han?"

"Here's what we're going to do."

The Emperor was a pleased man as he hurried to his quarters, the vibration of the decking beneath his feet announcing their lift off on schedule. They were on their way to headquarters and he had the imfamous rebel leader Leia Organa confined and under heavy guard in the servants' quarters.

He reached the double doors of his suite, activated the control and stepped into a very crowded room. The doors swished closed behind him. He stopped, shock freezing the smile on his face. "Who -- ?"

Han Solo tightened his grip around the woman's waist, and touched his blaster to her temple. "One of the rebels you missed, your Worshipfulness."

"What do you want?"

"You."

"Then turn Shayla loose, she's of no interest to you. My dear, have you been harmed?"

"No, Sire," Shayla whispered, fear alight in her pretty eyes. "I let them in thinking they were guardsmen. I'm sorry."

"It's all right, child you couldn't have known ... Them?"

"Just stay where you are and don't do anything foolish. Luke, check him for weapons."

Skywalker, his sabre drawn but deactivated, moved up behind the Emperor and quickly frisked him. "He's clean."

"Good. All right, you High Royalness, you sit down on the bed, but keep your hands in your lap. Remember, any wrong moves and the lady buys it."

"You kill her and you have no more bargaining power, my friend."

"That's very observant." Solo's eyes hardened. "Maybe you'd better explain that."

"You have me and Shayla. I have the Princess Leia Organa. I have a feeling after seeing the look that just crossed your young friend's face that she means as much to you, or, at least, to him, as Shayla does to me. You'll never get to her yourselves."

Luke stepped forward but stopped at a warning look from the Corellian. "What do you mean?"

"I've given orders that if anyone approaches her quarters but myself, personally and alone, she's to be killed immediately."

A silence fell over the Imperial suite. "Han," Luke finally ventured, "I think we've got a problem."

"You're great at understatements, kid." Solo shifted his hold slightly then swore. Get the comlink out and call Chewie. Tell him to shut up and tap out his coordinates. We want transportation real fast. He's to call when he's got us in sight and wait for orders."

A moment later a series of taps sounded from the small device and Solo nodded, pleased. "Good, he's ready. I should have known he'd break those grounding orders."

"You didn't tell him not to," Luke reminded him smiling.

"No, I didn't." Solo's expression became thoughtful. "Probably wouldn't have done much good if I had."

"What now?"

"We start negotiating."

Solo drew a thankful breath as the *Millennium Falcon* sped away from the Imperial fleet, boomed and disappeared into the protection of hyperspace. He swept his shaggy copilot a grateful look. "Thanks, pal, we couldn't have made it without you."

Chewbacca glared at his partner and barked angrily. His massive hand tightening on the freighter's yoke testified to his fury.

"Now take it easy," Solo voiced uneasily. "It's over and we're all fine."

Chewie roared, blue eyes levelled on the human beside him.

"All right, okay, I agree with you. It was a crazy idea. But it almost worked, damn it!"

"It did, didn't it?"

Solo let out a slow breath as Luke joined them. "You were great, kid. We make a good team. If the Princess hadn't shown up ... "

"We don't know that, Han," Luke stopped him. "I've been talking with Leia. Her plan was pretty good, too. If Talason hadn't been an Imperial agent, her plans would have worked -- if we hadn't been there." Luke shrugged. "Things have a way of working out for the best."

"A philosopher," Solo groaned. "How's her Royalness doing?" Still after my hide?"

"No, I don't think so. She realizes if you hadn't traded the Emperor's freedom for hers we'd likely be treading space right now."

Solo relaxed, the lopsided grin pulling at his handsome features. "That's right, I'll probably have to remind her of that occasionally to keep her in line."

"Don't count on it too much, Han," Luke warned easily.

"What do you mean?" Solo asked suspiciously.

"Well, we have a couple hours before we drop Shayla off at the agreed pickup point -- "

"And she goes back to the Emperor a sweet young hostage that offered her life to protect the Emperor from us bad sorts. She'll have all her dreams intact."

"Well, until then -- " Luke grinned impishly, "the girls are comparing notes."

"About what?" Solo asked, anticipating the young Jedi's answer.

"You."

Solo drew a deep breath, his eyes narrowing in helplessness. "It's going to be a long,long trip."

From the Sedalia, Missouri DAILY DEMOCRAT, 9-11-78...Peggy Barilla...

TRAGEDY AT RACETRACK

A sniper wielding an M-168 automatic rifle went on a rampage yesterday afternoon, killing five people and wounding eight others before being shot to death himself by Sedalia police.

Without warning, the sniper, identified as local resident Kenneth J. Boyd, opened fire into the crowd of spectators and participants assembled for the weekly competition at Southland Speedway, a stock-car track some twelve miles outside town. Said one witness: "That boy was crazy! He just brought that sucker up and started shooting, yelling at the top of his lungs, and didn't stop for nothing 'til the cops got him." Another witness described Boyd as appearing "happy, peaceful", as if under the influence of drugs. No motive for the crime is known; Chief of Police Falwell declined to comment pending an investigation.

The gunman, a Vietnam veteran, had been living for the past five years on the farm owned by his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Boyd, who expressed their deep sorrow at yesterday's events. According to them, their grandson had been emotionally unstable since his return from service in 1973. "He never really came home," Mrs. Boyd said.

Names of the victims are being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

REWARD

SHEILA PAULSON

I don't know why I came back.
Hell, I had my reward.
I was home free. I can handle Jabba;
I've done it before.
But that battle station --
Suicide, I told Luke,
And that's what is was for most of them.
Chewie turned on the radio.
"We're going in. We're going in full throttle.
That ought to keep those fighters off our backs."
Damn it, he's only a dumb kid.
How'd he get to be running the whole show?
"Turn the damn thing off," I told Chewie.
But all the while I was planning
How I'd get those fighters.
Chewie asked me what I was trying to do.
"I know what I'm doing."
Funny, I said the same thing to Chewie before.
Didn't mean the same thing, though.
Well, I got two fighters, disabled the other.
"You're all clear, kid."
Reward?
Yeah, sure, if they give me one I won't say no.
A man's got to make a living don't he?
That ain't the reason I came back, though,
But don't tell anybody I said that.
You can always find a reward someplace,
If you know what you're doing.
But just look at the grin on Luke's face.
"I knew you'd come back," he said.
Maybe there's more than one kind of reward.

Echoes from the Past

SHEILA PAULSON

I'm sitting in the cantina at the rebel base doing my damdest to get as drunk as possible so I can put the whole thing out of my mind, at least for awhile, and winding up as sober as a customs official, when along comes Luke Skywalker and plops down in the other chair and stares at me like he's wondering what's going on inside my head. Just what I don't need right now.

"Han," he says real soft, like he knows I'm hurting. "Don't you think you ought to tell me about it?"

I give him a real unfriendly look and say, "Look, kid, why don't you just beat it?" I never talked in that mean a voice to the kid before, but he doesn't even seem to notice.

"Han," he starts off, sounding worried, and I cut him off short.

"I ain't buying it, kid."

"I know something's wrong," he says, sounding kinda wise, the way old Kenobi used to sometimes.

"Why don't you take that Jedi crap and shove it."

But he only smiles a little, like he don't mind what I say to him. Probably he's been talking to Chewie. Well, what the hell, I don't need to tell him all the story, do I? Maybe just a little, and then he'll go away and I can get drunk and forget the whole thing.

So I shrug a little. "Okay, kid. Have a drink, will ya? No need for me to drink alone if I don't have to." I pour him a glass of the stuff. "Drink up. I'm buying."

He takes a drink and looks at me expectantly. I guess I can't put it off much longer so I start in. Maybe it'll even feel good.

"Rigahst ain't much of a world, kid. I was there about 13 years ago, and I ain't been back til last week when I agreed to take that message tape to the Rebel underground there. I'd made a fast getaway the last time, but after thirteen years, who'd remember that. Chewie and I unloaded the regular cargo, all nice and legal with papers to prove it, and then I told Chewie I had a stop to make and I'd be back in a couple days."

"A couple of days?" Luke asks me. "It takes that long to deliver a message tape?"

"Hell no, kid. I was gonna look up an old friend."

"Female, right?" Luke gets this big grin on his face.

I don't smile back, and he wipes his grin off fast. For a farm hick, he's not so dumb. "Yeah, female. I knew her a long time ago, and she was pretty special. Too good for me, and I knew it even then. Best thing I ever did was to leave her and not go back. But hell, as long as I was there, I wanted to see her again, even if she didn't know I was there."

"And did you?" Luke asks me.

"No. I found someone who knew her. She'd been dead a couple years."

Luke looks sympathetic. "What happened?"

"I don't know. Didn't want to find out. I just took off and left. I'd rather not know, if you get what I mean. Damn, I wish I would have stuck around just a little longer." I shrug. It's done, I guess.

"Well, I walked out of the place and all at once, a couple of the local police jumped me. 'Han Solo?' they asked me. I told them yeah, and what's it to them. Seemed like I was under arrest. 'What for?' I asked. 'My cargo's legal, and I ain't broke no laws.' And they told me I hadn't this time, but thirteen years ago I had. They got long memories on that damn planet. The two of the didn't look like much, so I decided to make a break for it. And one of them was the fastest man with the blaster that I ever saw." Even now that bothers me; some backwater jerk beat me, Han Solo to the draw. "And his blaster was set for heavy stun. Lights out."

The next thing I knew, I was in headquarters and their captain told me real regretful like that they couldn't keep me. He just found out I was wanted by the Empire, and that took precedence over local complaints. The damn bastard would have liked to hand me up by the thumbs or connect me to one of those high-duty mind probes, but he had to hand me over intact -- or almost -- and it was just killing him. Sweet character. Someday I'll go back there and show him a thing or two." That's just talk. I'll never go back to Righast, not even if my life depends on it and I think Luke knows it. He only nods, but he looks awful serious.

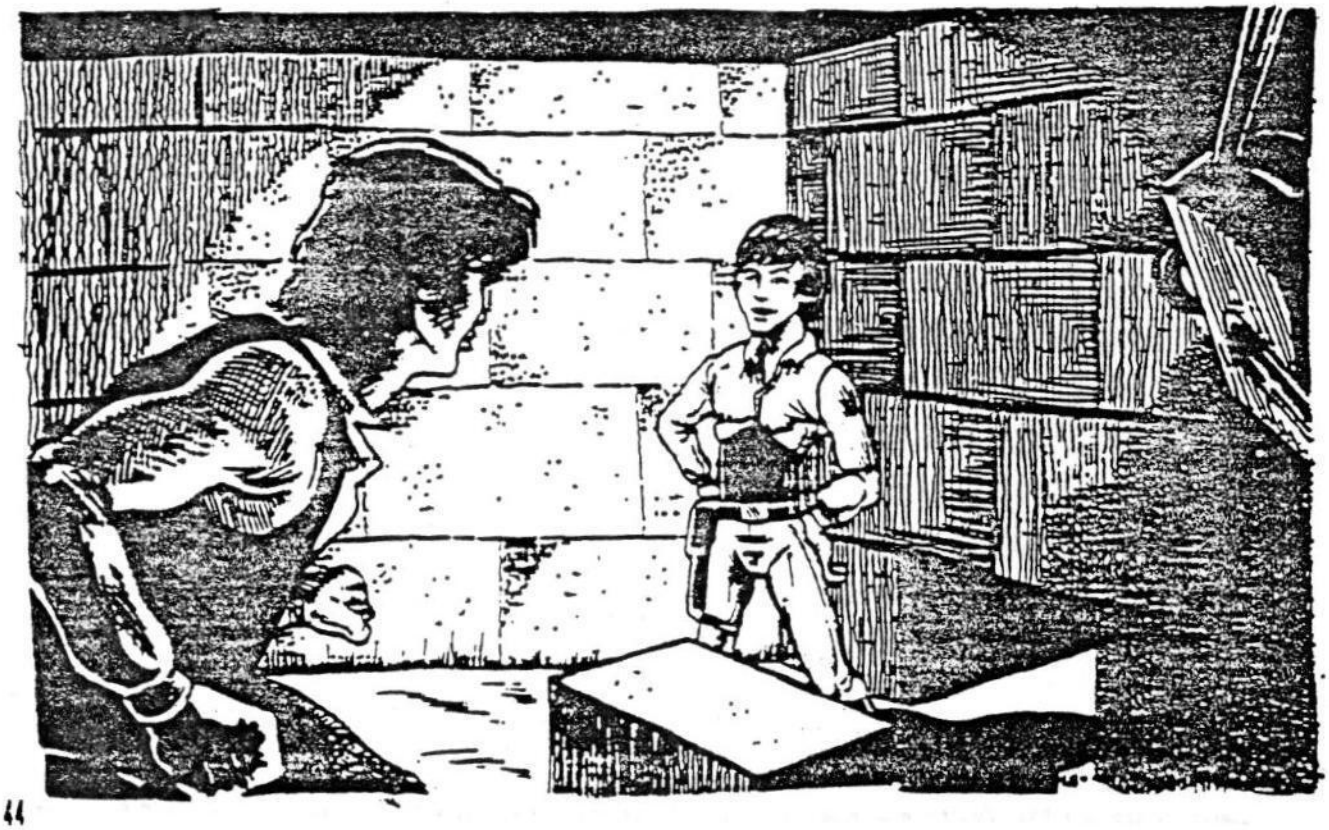
"Anyway," I go on, "He decided to let his boys work me over a little as a reward for their good work. The Empire wouldn't mind a bruise or two, he told them. But it wound up more than a bruise or two, more like a couple broken ribs and a concussion--well, you know that. You was there when Chewie hauled me back here.

"I woke up in a cell that must have seen its better days before the Clone Wars, but it had a solid lock and a remote camera so they could watch me. I hate those things. I hate those things. At first I hurt too much to do much of anything, but after awhile, I started feeling a little better, and I amused myself by making faces at the damned camera and maybe a few gestures that weren't too polite, and wondering when they were gonna turn me over to the Empire. Chewie didn't expect me for a couple days, so he wouldn't be trying a rescue, which was just as well. I didn't need Chewie getting caught. He wasn't in any local trouble, but the Empire probably wanted him too, and maybe he could get back and tell the rest of them what happened. It'd be tough on him, but we always knew that something like this might happen. There wasn't no way for me to get out either. The cell walls were big heavy blocks of stone, and in my condition, with the camera watching everything, I wasn't gonna be throwing blocks of stone around.

"Then all at once, I noticed something. The camera was off. The nasty little red light was out, and when I moved around, it didn't track me. Maybe they gave up, or didn't want to bother, damn them. Well, I got to work on the stone blocks, but even as I did, one of the stones started to move on its own. 'Hot damn,' I told myself, 'I'm getting rescued.' So I gave them a little help and hauled on the stone, and all at once it popped out and this kid crawled into the cell and grinned at me." Damn, I'm not gonna be able to tell this thing right. My voice doesn't sound any too steady, but Luke doesn't seem to notice.

"Kid?" he asks in surprise.

"Yeah. He wasn't no bigger than this." I measure his height with my hand, rather sketchily. The liquor must be starting to get to me after all. "Well, he got to his feet and gave me a big cocky smile. He looked at me



with big brown-gold eyes and said, cool as you please, 'Your name Han Solo?' I told him yeah, and why'd he want to know. And he said, 'Well, if you're Solo, I'm here to rescue you.' Get that, Luke. 'I'm here to rescue you.' That is one dumb line," I say to Luke, kind of amused.

Luke smiles reminiscently. "I don't know," he says like he's remembering something. "I think it's a pretty good line myself."

"You would. Anyway, this kid stood there -- he was about twelve years old, and he looked like he was pretty tough for his age. And, damn it, he had a blaster strapped to his hip like it belonged there, and I got a feeling he knew how to use it."

"Sounds like you, Han," Luke says, smiling broadly.

"Shut up!"

Luke looks at me in surprise, his smile vanishing. "What?" he asks blankly. That wasn't what he expected me to say.

"Never mind," I tell him hastily, covering for myself. "Anyway, he said he was there to rescue me, and so I said to him, 'Who are you, kid?' And he said to me, 'I'm a rebel, what'd you expect? We got a message tape out of Captain Davan's office already, and we couldn't leave you for the Empire."

"'And they're sending kids into prison to break people out?' I asked him. 'Tell me something I can believe.' And he got the stubbornest look I ever saw on his face and said, 'I'm a volunteer. I know the tunnels better than anybody, and there're some of them too small for grownups to get through. Besides, I had another reason so they let me come.'

"Well, I didn't worry about the other reason right then. 'If they're so small, how the hell will I fit?'

"'I got shovels, and I made some of them bigger. You'll fit. You're thin enough.' And he looked at me critically. Arrogant little bastard." I take a hasty swallow of my drink and refill my glass. Damn, I better watch what I say. This ain't getting any easier.

So I go on with the story. "Well, the kid told me we had to get out fast because the rebels could only hold off the power of the remote cameras just so long. So we crawled into the tunnel and pulled the stone closed behind us. Then the kid took out a light cube to help us find the way out, and pulled a comlink and said into it, 'All clear, reconnect power.' He switched the thing off before he even got an answer. 'Come on,' he said to me. 'We gotta hurry.'

"Hurry, no less! You ever climbed through about a hundred kilometers of narrow tunnels, Luke? Try it sometime with broken ribs if you think it's anything to write home about. And this kid was crawling along, cheerful as you please, chattering away about how he was gonna be a star pilot when he was a little older. He got some crazy freighter pilot to promise to take him on as ships boy or something when he turns thirteen. Hell, I didn't even start that young myself. So I asked him, 'What about your family?'

" 'I ain't got no family,' he said, real cold and nasty. 'I don't need no family either and I don't want one.' Then he got wistful. 'Did you have a family?' he asked me. Hell, that was the last thing I wanted to talk about. But the kid just pulled me out of a bad situation, so I guess I could tell him a little. I owed him one. I didn't have to tell him everything, did I? Sure, I had a family once. Don't remember them too good, though. My old man took off when I was about four. I remember him a little, I think. He was a pilot too. Wasn't one to settle down. Guess I'm lucky he stayed as long as he did. I remember my mother better. I was about eight when she died. We'd gone to live with her brother, and he'd always hated my father. Used to tell everybody I was just like him and I'd amount to nothing, the way he did. Maybe he was right," I say bitterly.

Luke looks at me soberly for a minute. "No, he was wrong. We all know that, Han." He sounds like he really means it.

I find that I'm smiling a little inspite of everything. "Thanks, Luke," I tell him.

"I mean it, Han. Go on."

"Okay. Anyway, I left home -- if you could call it that -- when I was about fourteen, and I ain't looked back since. Never regretted it, either. So I told the kid this, and it's funny, but he got real sympathetic all of a sudden, and he started grinning to himself like he was happy. I couldn't figure that out, and the way my head was aching from the beating and crawling through the stuffy tunnel, I didn't even try. After a while, the kid got out his comlink again and talked to his people. 'It's me,' he said. 'We'll be coming out of the alley in five minutes. Is it all clear, Jak?'

"'All clear,' the voice answered him. 'Are you all right, boy?'

"'Just fine, but Solo's hurt a little. Get the doc to meet us at headquarters.' He turned back to me. 'You got a crew or co-pilot we can notify to pick you up?'

"'I'll tell you when you tell me the code.' Maybe it was a little late to get suspicious, but I wasn't gonna get Chewie in trouble, and hell, I only had the kid's word he was a rebel. And he said, 'Your code first, Solo,' cool as you please. Damn it, the kid was pretty sharp. He knew his way around already. So I told him my half of the code, 'Alderaan.' And he came back with 'X-wing', just like he was supposed to. So I told him about Chewie and the *Falcon* and hoped like hell I was doing the right thing. And the kid gave me a big

smile like I'd just given him a present or something and passed the information on. Then he turned back to me. 'Can I come and see your ship?' he asked, sounding like a regular kid for the first time. 'Sure, why not?' I told him. 'If I don't have to make a fast getaway, that is.'

Then he came up with a real winner of an idea. 'Take me with you,' he said, like he didn't expect to be turned down. Well, hell, there ain't no room on the *Falcon* for a kid, and I told him so. Damn it, I could sympathize with him. There wasn't much going for him on Righast. Y'know, I almost thought about bringing him back here, but he wasn't really alone, not if he was working for the rebellion like he said and knew the codes and all. So I told him I couldn't, not this trip, but if he got a few years on him, I'd come back and see. He'd be a good pilot. Looked like he had a little Corellian blood, and Corellians are the best pilots around."

Luke looks real skeptically at me. "My father was the best star pilot in the galaxy," he informs me.

"Probably he was part Corellian, then," I hell him with a half smile. Force of habit, I guess. "Anyway, the kid was real disappointed when I told him he couldn't come, but he covered it up real fast like he didn't really want to in the first place. He was pretty good at hiding his feelings. You have to be when you're on your own. When you're a kid, I mean. So we went on, and pretty soon we came to anothe blank wall, and we got another stone out ofthe way, and came out in a narrow smelly alley. It was night by then, which was all for the good, because it'd be easier to get back to the *Falcon*. Only the kid said we had to go back to headquarters first. They had a message tape for me to bring back here, and they wanted to see me. The kid told me, 'It's not far. Think you can walk a few blocks?'

'Hell, yes,' I said, though I wasn't too steady on my feet yet. I wished I had a blaster, though, and I told the kid that, even though I knew he wouldn't give me his. 'It's mine,' he said, determined like. Gotta respect him for that -- I wouldn't have given my blaster up to somebody I didn't know, either. But I'd have to take it away from him if things got too hot.

"So we headed back to headquarters, and I hoped it wasn't too far. If it was a whole lot farther, I was gonna shame myself and fall flat on my face, and I didn't want to do that in front of the kid, somehow. But we came to the end of the alley, and the kid pulled me back into the shadows. The square was full of stormtroopers. The alarm must have been sounded. 'All clear?' I asked the kid skeptically. He only said, 'We can't get out this way. Come on.' So we went back through the alley and all at once we were in the spaceport, but the opposite end from where the *Falcon* was berthed. 'This way,' the kid told me, and he took hold of my arm like I was a cripple or something. But he did know the way, and the alley was dark as hell. So we wound around through the edge of the port for a while. My head was aching like it was about to fall off, but I didn't say anything to the kid. He noticed, though, and pretty soon he called a halt and told me to sit down for a minute while he scouted the way. He knew the territory, so I let him go ahead. I didn't sit down, though, because I didn't think I could get up again if I did.

"Pretty soon the kid came back, and he looked at me like he was really worried. 'We can get through,' he said, 'but it won't be easy.' He gave me a really thorough look, as if he was trying to decide if I was gonna pass out or not. Then he came up and put his arm around my waist. 'You can lean on me if you need to, Han,' he said in a real soft voice, like he knew it bugged me to have a kid help me out. But it did help. We went along, and we came out to a place where a big stack of crates were piled against one wall. Out the other way was a big clear space, and past that there were about half a dozen stormtroopers. 'They can't see us,' the kid whispered. 'Don't make a sound. Once we're past here, we're home free.'

So we got about halfway across and he called a halt. 'Wait a minute,' he whispers. He went ahead a few steps and looked around the corner. All at once, the troopers saw us. They started firing, and the kid whipped out his blaster and polished off three of them easy as you please. Damn good shot," I tell Luke like I'm bragging. He gives me kind of a funny look.

"The fourth and fifth stormtroopers went down, too, but the sixth one got off a shot that missed me by a fraction and hit the crates. The all at once the kid let out a wild yell and came charging straight at me in some kind of crazy tackle. Ordinarily that wouldn't have knocked me down, but I wasn't in the best of health just then, and he knocked me clear of the crates. I landed hard, and my ribs hurt like hell. I didn't realize right then what was going on until all the crates came tumbling down." I come to a stop and say, "I don't want to tell you anymore of this, Luke." I don't look at him, but I can tell he's watching me very closely. I look around, and I realize there's nobody else in the room but Luke and me. Even the bartender is gone.

Luke says, "I think you have to, Han." And he didn't sound like some kid from a backwater who's never been anyplace in his life. He sound older, and there's that Kenobi feeling again. Even I can tell the Force is strong in the kid right now. I finally raise my head and look him straight in the eye. "Damn it, Luke," I say in a voice that doesn't even sound like mine, "I can't. Don't you see? I just can't!"

"Try," he says. "I know it's hard for you, Han."

"Did Chewie tell you anything?"

"No, just that he thought I should talk to you. Han, you trust me, don't you?"

When he puts it like that it's different. Besides Chewie, there ain't been nobody else I'd trust with much of anything, but I guess I trust Luke. Even now, when he's sitting there like some Jedi, his face all serious, I can see he's worried as hell about me. And I'm not used to that from anybody but Chewie. It sure ain't doing me any good sitting here drinking the foul stuff they serve on the base. I ain't sleeping nights, either. My wide-awake nightmares are real dandies. I can just imagine what the asleep ones would be like.

So I say, "Hell, Luke, I don't know how to say it. But I'll try. Where is everyone?"

"I told them all to leave before I sat down."

"Nice. They're all gonna love you, kid." I'm stalling now.

"Too bad," he said, real indifferent to their problems. "Besides, I figured you didn't really want an audience."

I look at him for a minute. He's right. An audience is the last thing I want. Even a one person audience is bad enough. "Okay," I said, determined to get it out as fast as I can. Once it's said, it won't have to be said again. "Okay. The crates fell, and when I got turned around, I saw they mostly fell right where I'd been standing. And that's where the kid was, under the damn crates. I forgot all about my ribs and I got over there faster than I thought I could move and hauled the crates off him. Damn, they were heavy. I don't know what happened to the other trooper. I didn't even see him again. I got the kid free, and he was just lying there, not moving at all. But he opened his eyes and even grinned at me a little, a kind of half smile. 'You okay?' he asked me like that was all that mattered. I nodded, 'cause I couldn't seem to think anything to say. I been around enough to know the kid wasn't gonna get well. Even if they got him in a hospital right then, he wasn't gonna make it. He said in a real soft voice that I could hardly hear, 'I didn't really mean it.' 'Mean what?' I asked him. And damned if he didn't say, 'I didn't mean it when I said I didn't want a family.' And then he smiled at me, a kind of happy smile like everything was just great, and the next thing I knew he was dead.

Luke reaches out and touches my arm like he thinks I've told him everything. "Han, I'm sorry."

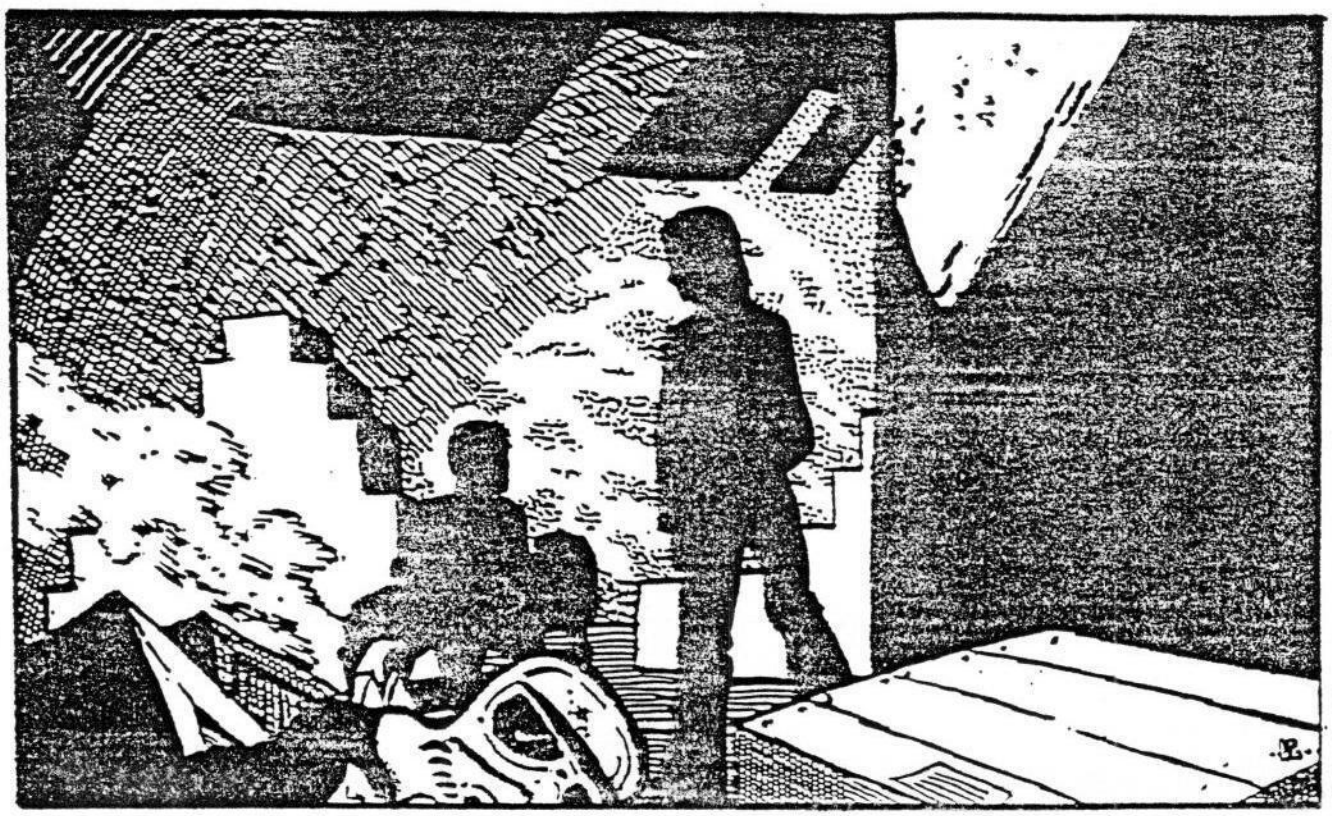
And all of a sudden I gotta tell the rest of it. I gotta say it and face it and it ain't gonna be easy. "Wait a minute, Luke," I say. "I ain't done yet."

For a minute he looks kinda worried, like he almost knows what to expect, and I say, "Then a man came out of nowhere, a tall gray-haired man, looked a little like General Dodonna, and he came running up. 'Han,' he said, all broken up, and I'd never seen him before in my life. What the hell, I wondered, but he didn't seem to notice me. He bent over the kid and looked at him, and he was practically crying. 'Oh, Han,' he said, and it dawned on me that he was talking to the kid. Then he looked up at me. 'You must be Solo,' he said. 'What the hell happened?'

"I told him about the crates, and even as I was telling him, I got a funny feeling that things were about to get worse, even though they were at rock bottom right then. I finally got up my nerve to ask, 'What'd you call the kid?' And I didn't really want to know the answer.

"He looked at me. 'I wondered if he'd tell you,' he said. And I asked, 'Tell me what?' even though I thought maybe I knew the answer already. He said, 'This boy,' and his voice was shaking a little as he talked, 'has worked for us for a year. His mother died a couple of years ago. She worked for the Alliance, so I took him in. We didn't know how to reach his father or we would have tried. I think she would have liked that. And now that we've found you, it's too late.'"

Luke gasps, even though he must've already guessed what I was gonna say. And I go on. "Hell, Luke, he was my own kid. I didn't even know I had one till it was too late. And now he's dead, and he died saving my life, and I never did a thing for him when he was alive. Now do you understand why I didn't want to talk about it?"



Luke just looks at me for a minute, like he's at a loss for words. I can see in his eyes that he hurting for me, knowing how I feel. And all at once, I'm glad I told him, even though it doesn't really help, not yet. Then Luke finds his voice and he says, "I don't see what you could have done about it, Han."

"I could have been there."

"No. You didn't know about him when you left. You were right not to go back. Maybe if you'd known, it would have been different. She could have found you to gotten word to you, but she didn't."

"She knew she couldn't trust me," I tell him bitterly.

"No, I don't think that was it. She named him after you, remember. Han, if you'd known she was pregnant, you would have gone back wouldn't you?"

I think about it a minute and nod. "Yeah, I guess so."

And Luke looks kinda wise and sad. "But no matter how you might have wanted to, you wouldn't have stayed. you werent' ready to settle down, and you would have wound up doing the same thing your father did. This way, the boy at least knew that you hadn't known about him. He could still tell himself that it might have been different if you had known. But if you'd gone back and then left, he would have had to go through what you did, and he might have wound up thinking it was his fault that you'd gone away."

I look at him in surprise. "The way I always did."

Luke nods. "Han, at least he got to know you at the end. From the way you tell it, he was glad of the chance. I think that's important."

"But I never gave him nothing," I protest, as if, by saying it, I could somehow change it.

Luke says, "I think you did, Han."

"What?"

"You lived up to his image of you. You didn't disappoint him."

I think about that for a minute. Luke might be right, but it ain't enough right now. Maybe later when I think over the stuff he's been telling me, but not now. I feel like hell, and even Luke's understanding doesn't help enough. I feel so tired I hardly have the strength to go on sitting there. Maybe they let me out of the hospital a little too soon.

"Han?" Luke asks, worried. "Han are you all right?"

I can't find any words to answer him. I shake my head, and then I realize with horror that I'm gonna break down and cry and there's nothing I can do about it. "Luke," I say urgently, "go away. Please!" And I put my head down on the table.

Luke slides his chair around beside mine and puts his arm around my shoulders. It feels kinda good. Maybe it won't be so bad to have him there after all.

I ain't cried in front of anybody since I was younger than my kid was, but now I just can't stop myself. Luke doesn't say anything at all, just sits there with me. Then a big furry hand comes down on my shoulder and a familiar voice rumbles in Wookiee, "Don't worry, babe. It'll be okay." I don't know when he came in, but I'm glad he's there.

"Oh, hell, Chewie," I say, and I can't say anything else. For what seems like forever I sit there with Luke and Chewie watching over me, and finally I start to feel a little better. I know that no matter what, they won't mention this again unless I want them to. Maybe I'll be able to work it out.

So I sit up again and I even manage to smile a little. They both look pretty relieved. Damn, I sure got lucky to have friends like them. I can't help thinking how things might have been different, if the kid hadn't died. Chewie would have loved him, and Luke would probably be good with kids. Better than me, anyway. But it don't do any good to think that kind of stuff. I struggle to my feet and Chewie grabs my arm to steady me.

"What're you gonna do?" Luke asks me, a little worried.

I find that I'm yawning. "I think I might try and get a little sleep," I tell him. Luke knows I ain't been sleeping too good lately, and he nods in approval.

"Good idea, Han. I guess I'll see you later. If -- you need me, I'll be around."

"Yeah, kid. I know. Thanks."

I give him a smile and kinda straighten my shoulders a little. "Y'know," I say, kinda thoughtful, "the kid turned out real well, when you think about it."

And Luke gives me a smile back and says, like I'm supposed to take it light, "It must be that Corellian blood, right, Han?"

And I look at him. "You know, Luke, you might just be right."

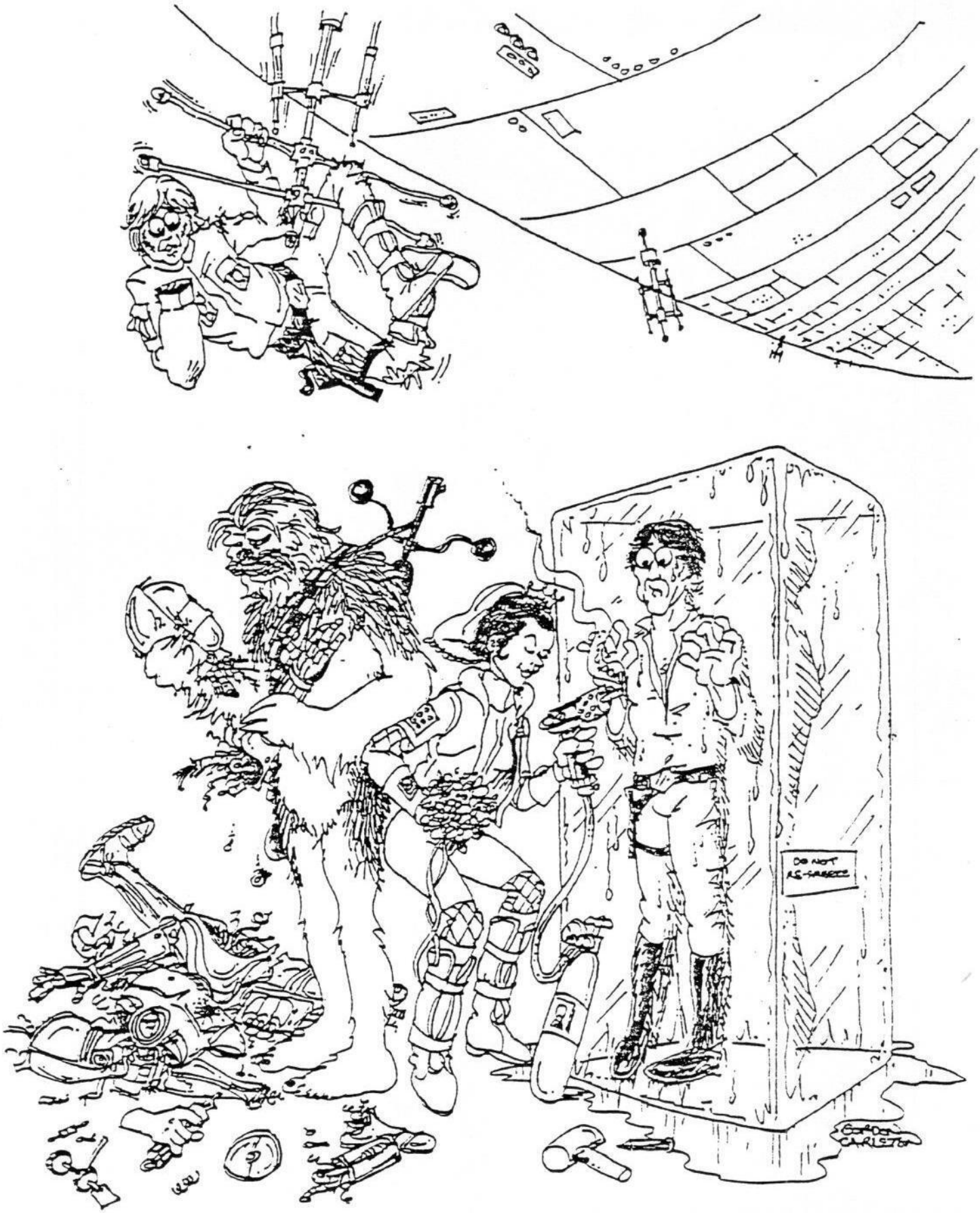
LB
·80·

Who Only Wait and Suffer

Alan Dean said, "What the hell!"
And pitched Lord Vader down a well.
And though we hear he'd lost an arm
What ain't on film does Darth no harm.
But Lucas has another plan:
He'll have the Empire capture Han.
We hear they'll torture Solo twice --
He'll end the sequel trapped in ice.
And Luke, with scar, we understand,
Will have to do with one less hand.
Chewie, captured, finds release,
Saves C-3PO piece by piece.
And how, we ask, can Leia wed
A hero hacked, or stunned or dead?
So Lucas lets us speculate
Upon our favorites' future fate.
I only hope George knows about
The rule: "Three Strikes and then you're out!"

by

MARTYNN


DO NOT
RE-INSERT

For Maggie

1944

Tracing fire with your fingertips,
Etching air with your crystal eyes,
You remade me
into your love.
And we loved,
etching fire,
tracing air,
Sculptina souls,
welding hearts.
One being
formed of two.

Stealing rare days with your smiles,
Snatching life by our few hours,
You discovered me
in your loving.
And we laughed,
on the edge of sobs,
in the boundary of tears.
Snatching days,
stealing life,
Laughing, sobbing,
one love complete
shared by two.

by

RONNI SACKSTEDER

FREE

Han, it's Luke.
How bad are you hurt?
How can I help?
Come on, Han, speak to me.
Say something -- anything.
Call me 'kid'.
Never thought you'd hear me say that,
did you?
You glued that nickname on me
and I've always hated it,
but now I want to hear it.
Just once more, please?
Han, just move an arm or leg.
You've never been this quiet before,
and it scares me.
You wouldn't leave me to tell Chewie,
would you?
You always promised him ten days' notice
and now you're gonna break your word.
That Wookiee's really gonna be upset.
Han, *please* open your eyes.
Glare at me, yell because I woke you up --
I don't care!
Just let it be a bad dream.
I need you, Han.
Somebody's gotta be here to pull my tail
outta the fire.
So the *Falcon* was hit.
She's been hit before,
just as bad as this,
and it's never stopped you.
You're not gonna let a little thing like this ....
I guess it's not so little this time,
is it?
It's okay now, Han.
I'll tell Chewie that ...
that you're flying free.

by

BETH BOWLES

*HAN SOLO***

a ladies' man for all seasons

Sherry Magee

There he was, sitting in a Mos Eisley contina, in debt up to his afterburners, when his co-pilot brought him an old desert rat and a kid still damp behind the ears who were looking for a lift to Alderaan. They were even willing to pay his already exhorbitant price for passage. All he had to do was, be chased, captured, thrown down a garbage chute, and nearly blown up a dozen times to find himself a hero with a medal, an overnight living legend, and the ultimate sex symbol of STAR WARS fandom. Could a down-on-his-luck Corellian smuggler ask for anything more?

Probably. And if he did, fandom's authors would give it to him. Han Solo has made dozens of whimsical scribblers scramble to their typewriters and pound out information about him. When STAR WARS ended there were so many questions left unanswered about him that entire universes have been founded to answer them. Since variety is the spice of life in fandom, seldom do any two answers agree.

I propose to concentrate on one aspect of fandom's treatment of Han Solo -- his relationship with women. Certainly that subject has inspired a variety of tales and delightful interpretations. Leia suggested there was more to him than money, and where fanzine authors are concerned one of those interests is the opposite sex. There is a Han-tale or poem to fulfil everyone's fantasy.

To the majority of STAR WARS fans, and especially to that group known as 'Hanatics', Han Solo is attractive to women. Most accept and appreciate him as a good looking male who blatantly struts his sexuality in a manner to be admired. What is the nature of this attraction? The lazy crooked smile, the swagger, the lean body and the slightly battered good looks? Perhaps. They certainly help, but I believe there is more to his appeal than mere physical attraction.

Han is the alter ego of everyone tied to conventional duties and responsibilities. He's a rambler and a gambler with his life as the stake, freer than any of us. When things get tight he can raise ship, make the jump to light speed and be across the galaxy in the wink of an eye. Sure he's in debt and has seen his share of hard times, but you get the feeling he's chosen to live on the edge and doesn't regret it for a moment. With danger nipping at his heels, he seems vital, alive, and able to make the best of any situation. The fact that he is a bit of a rascal only adds to the attraction.

In her poem "Spacer Man" (WARPED SPACE #41), Jane Firmstone describes a woman who runs a bar, for whom life is hard work and no illusions. She takes a cynical look at the appeal of a swaggering rocket jockey with a crooked grin:

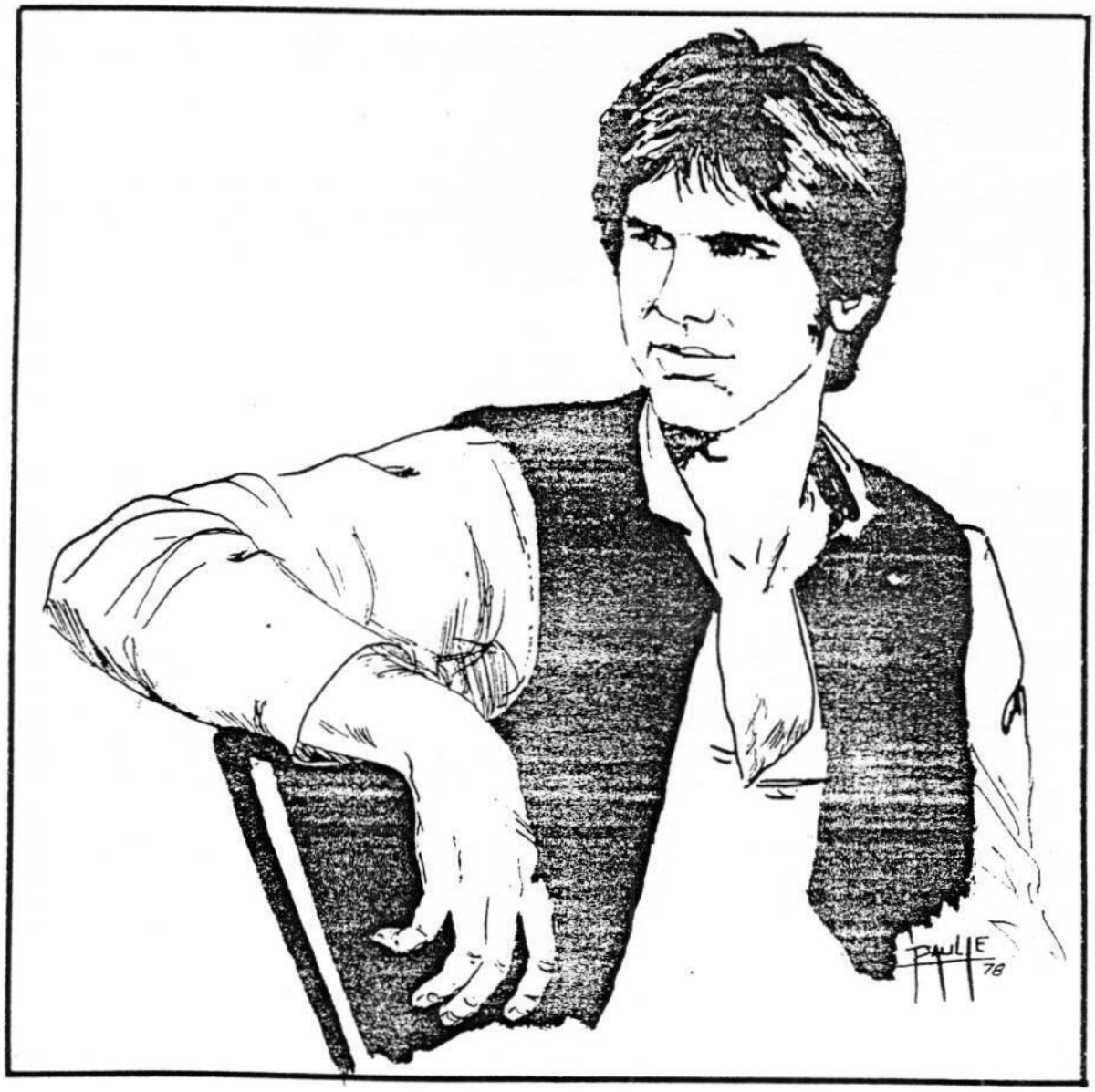
> *"You've seen the stars while I can no longer even wish on them. You come in off the street and while away a few hours before you go back to those pretty sparkles in the sky. Sometimes I look up at them and then I'm knowing them for what they are -- the shattered fragments of dreams tossed into the heavens, refracting the light from a thousand suns. Bitter reminders of all the crushed hopes and broken dreams.*

She sends him away, closes the bar only to find that he has waited for her. At least for one night she will not be alone.

> *"I look up at the stars and see that they are smiling. Who knows, perhaps tonight I shall even wish on one ....*

By letting the Corellian into her life for even a single night she has reawakened her ability to hope and dream. Most of us may not be as disillusioned, but he helps remind us, too.

Yet the exact nature of Han's appeal remains an elusive one. Susan Matthews wrote a bemused poem on this subject in her "Solo Riddens-Laughing Corellian" published in SOLO. After acknowledging his many faults, the lady in the poem is still willing to say:



" ... I've had men
who wanted to marry me,
to shield me from this rough life evermore;
It isn't as if I'd had no choice -- ah, Han Solo,
I don't know what it is, the wicked men,
but I do know
that as long as I have a pillow to my name
there's room on it for that tousled head,
room between the sheets for his long limbs,
room in my life for that bright inconsistent comet
that comes thundering round my orbit now and then.
No, I can't say there's anything special about him,
and as far as I'm concerned his worth stands zero;
but still I'm fond of him, can't deny him,
and I'll take him in whenever he comes."

Like the country song says, ladies love outlaws.

I've yet to read a story that portrays Han as inexperienced at love making, even though we all know he had to start somewhere. He is usually depicted as an almost ideal partner -- skilled, considerate, seeking his partner's sexual pleasure as well as his own. Even if the encounter is just good fun, there always seems to be an element of caring that causes even jaded prostitutes to gaze wistfully after him. And Han does seem to know a lot of fallen angels. True to the spacer's tradition he has a lady or three in every downport in the galaxy. They don't spend their lives waiting for the *Falcon* to dock, but when she's landed, they're guaranteed a good, loving time. He is usually monogamous but can be polygamous as, for example in the Thousand Worlds Chronicles where Corellians consider it strange to have only one partner at a time. No is Han concerned about the nationality or ethnicity of his partner; human and alien are alike to him. It's pleasure that counts.

However, be assured that all authors do not portray the smuggler as a paragon among men. There are less savory aspects to his relationships with the opposite sex. He can be less than irresistable when his arrogance and egoism get into the act, but he usually suffers for these attitudes. For example, when he gets fresh with Judi Handricks' heroine Cori Beckett in "Stowaway" (SCUM AND VILLAINY), she punches him hard enough to break a rib. Though on a less violent level, Han gets more than he bargains for when he uses his sexual attraction to further his own purposes in Ellen Blair's "Winter Music" (SKY WALKER #3).

In this story a young Han has been captured by pirates and sold as a slave. The buyer is Yonara, female head of the Byaway clan, who buys him to rescue him, but insists that he work for the clan until she can verify his story that he is a free man. When she is unable to do this, Yonara offers him the opportunity to earn his release by repairing and racing her father's old freighter in a regatta. If he wins, he's free. Han accepts the challenge but decides to add some insurance by seducing Yonara, hoping she will do anything he wants -- like void his work contract. The seduction succeeds, but he finds himself caught in his own crossfire, finally forced to acknowledge both grief and love for a woman who knows him for what he is and loves him anyway.

This aspect of seeing through the swaggering cynicism of Han's exterior runs through many fan stories. Few are the heroines who leave his attitudes unchallenged with the result of forcing the Corellian into some much- needed self-examination. Relationships that begin as antagonistic, as with Cori Becket or Leia Organa, usually conclude with Han dropping his chauvanistic pose to become friend or helper. In several tales he helps a woman acheive independence by teaching her a skill, usually piloting or smuggling. Though he arranges a monetary reward for his assistance, his motivation 'a obvious. He is much nicer than he wants to admit.

Women may turn to Han for help and he will give it, if a bit grudgingly. In "Assault on Logaria" (PEGASUS #3) Cori Beckett loses her ship and seeks Han's aid to recover it. Seldra Kaidel, JJ Adamson's lady smuggler, goes to him when her brother turns up missing in "Green Fire of the Rhil" (EMPIRE STAR, vol. 1, no. 2). And of course, there are countless where the Princess of Alderaan coerces him into helping the Alliance one more time. But even more important, when the smuggler is in trouble, it is perfectly acceptable for him to turn to a woman for assistance.

"Marketable Commodity" (PEGASUS #4) finds Cori coming to the Corellians aid when he is injured, his ship disabled on an out-of-the-way planet. When he loses both the *Falcon* and the Princess in "Breakout" (SOLO), he turns to his friend, lover, and fellow smuggler Seldra. In JJ Adamson's STAR WARS sequel novella "Vendette", Princess Leia not only comes to his aid but has to fly the *Falcon* as well (you can imagine how much the Corellian enjoyed that!), and in "KGK-45" (EMPIRE STAR, no. 2, vol. 1) she saves his life. His friend and lover General Jennett ap Rhiannon, becomes his go-between in the Susan Matthews story "Lady of the Outlaws" (SOLO). And in a forthcoming story by Kelly Hill, "Second Chance", Han will accept a woman's help in re-establishing his psychological self-confidence about his manhood. As fandom's authors write these stories, it is neither strange nor unusual for the sexes to help each other.

Conventional male-female relationships break down even farther in stories regardingrole reversal. In these tales Han assumes the role of a woman's concubine (now there's a fantasy for you!). Nikki White does this in the humourous tales for her zine MULTIVERSE ONE, while Susan Matthews treats a similar subject as part of her "Excerpts from a Corellian Diary" now being serialized in FALCON'S FLIGHT . Han is reunited with the captain of the renegade Imperial ship *Ragnarok* after a long separation. They acknowledge that they still love one another, and she asks, "Shall I be your woman then?"

> *"Is it for a Corellian outlaw to take a General to be his Woman? No, I shall be your fancy-man, your little man, First Gentleman of the Bedchamber ... "*

The final result is something of a compromise, but the Corellian agrees to follow her for a time, willingly accepting the more submissive role.

Most of Han's relationships are, however, more casual affairs mixing love and friendship and a good time is had by all. If there is a lack of permanence in them, this is understood, even desired by both parties. After all, his ladies are independant souls with their own lives to lead. As he explains in "Green Fire of the Rhil":

> *"I meant to come back, sweetheart. I always meant to drop in on you -- you know that."*
>
> *Seldra smiled. "Sure I know ... Most of the time I ain't there to be dropped in on anyway; you know me."*
>
> *"Footloose," he nodded... "*

Such a role re-enforces Han as the ideal partner; the woman can have her fun, and there are no strings attacned.

However, there are stories in which Han's realtionship with the lady takes a different angle implying he might settle down. A case in point is Maggie Nowakowska's story "Nothing Left to Lose" (SKYWALKER #3). The reader is introduced to Bethen Avery, independant spacer, a woman with Sight and Jedi powers she is trying to deny. She and Han begin an affair at a time in the Corellian's life when, determined to be tied to nothing and no one, he has left Chewie, Luke and the Alliance behind to pursue his own independance. He suggests to her that they team up for a while:

> *"Fly free? With a mate?"*
>
> *The Corellian started, stung by Bethen's implication of an attempted committment on his part. "Beth," he said carefully, "I ain't the kind to cling. You know I got no crew; my co-pilot -- he had other concerns and I let him go with them. I make no claims on anyone; I ain't making any on you. I like you; you're fun to be around. Seems to me we could have some good times together. Why not? A lot of Free Agents travel in families, and a lot of Indies*

settle down if they live long enough. But not you, and not me. We're a good pair to make it for a while 'cause each of us knows the other'll let 'em go."

"It always starts out that way, Han."

"Babe, with me, it ends that way."

But of course it doesn't. As their relationship progresses, Han becomes more and more attached to Bethen, making claims and demands on her despite his protestations. As friends and fellow spacers begin to refer to Bethen as his "spooner", a term implying that she is more than just his number one lady, she resents the possession and tries to clarify the situation. Han refuses to acknowledge the problem. Too involved with her own needs and personal demons to cope with the demands of a permanent relationship, Bethen leaves him. Han is hurt, unable to comprehend what has gone wrong. His uncle DevAlev tries to talk to him:

"Han? I read her note. It happens all the time, you know. Indie fems, they fly freer than we do. They're skittish about loving ... A man can only hold a fem so long."

"I wasn't holding her!" Han snapped.

Dev laughed gently. "Han, come on. We all saw it. You were thicker than ... "

"And if you and everybody else hadn't mouthed all oever about her and me she wouldn't have gotten her crazy ideas about being held!"

"A woman doesn't leave just from talk, Han. We all thought you .... "

"I'm tired of what everyone thinks!" Solo shouted. "Everywhere I go everyone 'thinks' me into their own little box. All I did was love her. What's wrong with that? I'm Corellian! My love don't hold!"

"Any love holds." Dev met Han's angry glare steadily. "Any love, Han. No matter how kindly. It's just that one day you learn that good loving don't really tarnish your freedom that much after all. You're lucky you learned that: most Indies don't. Most Indies are still little kids, running away from home."

Han's failure at a 'not strings' relationship seems an all too familiar one. In other stories, however he is more successful in long term affairs, the authors seeing him as settling down to an approximation of domesticity. Here are two examples:

Chris Jeffords, co-editor of the zine GALACTIC FLIGHT, is writing a series of stories in which Han not only has a pemanent lady, Taze, but several children as well. The point in his life at which this relationship occurs and the details of his domesticity remain to be seen. The idea of Han, wife and children conjures up some delightful, if improbable images.

Susan Matthews wrote a tale of Luke's marriage to Leia in "A Wedding March" (AGAINST THE SITH #3). Han pulls a surprise by asking his friends if he can share the 'joining day'. The smuggler wants to marry Hansa, a Shulammite woman, first introduced by the author in "Han Solo and the Shulammite Woman" (FALCON'S FLIGHT #1). There has been a slight complication in their relationship that has motivated Han to change his single status:

"We're hand-fasted Corelli-wise, kid. But she's not Corellian by blood. And she's carrying my kid. Luke. I got raised a bastard m'self and that's no problem -- on Corelli; but here in this Alliance of yours ... well, I don't want nobody lookin' cross-eyed at my woman. I'd like to be joined with Hansa all public and proper-like. If you don't mind, that is ... "

Not everyone sees the Corellian as forever footloose and fancy free .

But what about the Princess? After all, STAR WARS was set up as a Han-Luke-Leia triangle, yet it seems that most of fandom's authors rule the princess out of bounds to the pirate. Whether this stems from the fact that Luke is the hero, and so traditionally most likely to get the girl, or because solving the triangle this way frees the smuggler for adventures with the women of the writer's creation is debateable. In most stories the Corellian and the Princess squabble like irate siblings with Han playing 'big brother' to his two young companions and dispensing his own brand of advice and friendship.

In the stories from GALACTIC FLIGHT Chris Jeffords and Mark Walton take the motives behind the banter a step farther. They see the Princess as having been raised as a tool of the rebellion. She is as cold and hard as any weapon with no time or place in her life for romance with either Luke or Han. If she prefers the young Jedi it is because his talents suit her purposes. When she and the Corellian argue, there is an edge of genuine hostility. Some of this relationship emerges in "Journey to Hamlor" (GALACTIC FLIGHT #2); more will follow in future stories by the authors.

Yet there are a few romantic variations to the relationship between princess and pirate. In JJ Adamson's tales from AEGANS RIM there is a hint of attraction between the two. The smuggler keeps in touch with the Alliance, flying occasional missions for them, turning to them for help when the trouble is more than he can handle. In the novel VENDETTA Leia and Luke help him rescue Chewie from the spice mines of Kessel; by "KGK-45" (EMPIRE STAR, vol. 1, no. 2), he has returned to Alliance headquarters once more:

Leia's eyes followed his tall supple shape as he waved down a transport and disappeared behind the reserve fighters: so, he was back again -- and still in one piece by the trick of luck or the Force --and this time there was no emergency. Her face darkened as she remembered that

other time, the great empty space where Chewie should have been: turning, she watched the Wookiee shambling off for the vast white ellipsoid of his ship, remembered again how that freighter had pulsed beneath her own fingers, the look on the Corellian's smooth face when it became evident that a Princess from Alderaan was going to have to fly his ship -- the sweet taste of his lips and the look of that special smile that was hers alone when the crazy raid on Kessel's spice mines was done and they were safely away. His smile could do strange things to a girl -- if she gave it half a chance.

Hints like this are dropped in several stories from AEGAN'S RIM, but the attractions seems to be far more on Leia's part than on Han's. It is she who finally confronts their relationship in "Breakout" (SOLO). By the time this occurs Leia has been seriously injured in an encounter with the Imperials; Han, Chewie and Luke have come to her aid with the help of Han's lady Seldra. In her search for support, Leia is willing to admit her feelings for the Corellian, but correctly realizes that there is a problem:

"I've left it to late, haven't I, Han" she whispered.

"Left what too late?" he said, feigning blankness though he understood perfectly. She would not answer for a long time, and the hand on his arm was not steady.

"Were you ever interested? Did you ever care?"

Oh dear God ....

Han had so completely ruled her off limits in his own mind that he had never allowed himself to feel a lover's interest in her. Now he feels he is committed elsewhere, but does not want to hurt her:

"Not too late," he said softly, holding her hands and acknowledging to himself the heavy heat of his own heart. "Just ... the wrong time. Now -- it just wouldn't be right; strife, too much strife -- you don't want me, honey, you just wanted someone to be with you, to hold you -- just someone, not me." He chaffed her hands lightly. "Luke's breaking his heart over you, you know that."

"I know," she said quietly. "I don't want just 'someone'. I always wanted you, Han. You knew that -- even Luke knew." ...

The catch in her voice stabbed at him. If Luke had not been so caught up in her spell, if Seldra had not been as close as the other end of an intercom link, he knew the battered, wearied needing she exuded would have wrought a spell of its own. But now it was not right, and it was so easy to say the words they both wanted to hear -- "There's years and years of 'later', honey, and better times and places and ways for it to happen."

It seemed that no stories would be written that would bring pirate and princess together -- until Susan Matthews wrote "Lady of the Outlaws" (SOLO). This is the story of the long, slow and painful realization that, although their iedologies differ, though they argue, Han and Leia really care for each other. Before they can face this fact a lot of troubled days and nights have to take place, and a bit of pride has to be swallowed. Finally Leia seeks the smuggler out in the cantina of his choice and confesses that she wants to stay with him:

"Stay with me, Leia. Stay as long as you like. I think -- I -- ah -- I'd like you to stay with me." No, he couldn't say it, not even if she was serious. He couldn't say it now, not just yet. But Leia heard the words that he couldn't say, and knew them for what they were. She smiled at him tenderly, her whole face full of love for him: it's all right, Han, her eyes told him. I understand. I love you, too....

They didn't look like young lovers as they strolled, she with her thumb hooked into the belt loop at the small of his back, he with his arm lightly around her, fingers cupped ever so slightly, palm nestling her shoulder -- there might have been a couple years of attachment between them. Slowly and leisurely, not minding the small sea-rain, they walked out to the Falcon's berth, Han and Leia together.

And the circle is finally complete.

So there you have it, an overview of the Corellian and his ladies. And what ladies they are: generals, pirates, smugglers, warriors, princesses -- all strong willed and independent. It seems that the definition of Han in fan fiction is governed largely by the growing consciousness of women today. Seeing themselves as stronger, more independent, they are willing to appreciate the love, but not the domination, of the Corellian. He becomes the composite of what many would like to see in a partner -- big brother, friend, love. Han Solo in skin tight jeans, blaster on hip strolled out of that Mos Eisley cantina right into the hearts and imagination of fandom With THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK looming on the summer horizon, he will soon return for more adventures on the big screen. All this Hanatic can say is, may his swash never buckle!

The writer of this article wishes to thank all the authors who gave her permission to quote from their stories.

Lettuce Farmer

Jane Firmstone-Rafferty

Hey, lettuce farmer, where you goin' so fast
in that badass black Chevy?
Who's that new blond next to you,
the one with the gum and the vacancy upstairs?
You afraid of a woman who knows how to do something
besides roll in your back seat?
You scared you might have to make conversation
afterward?
What do you do in the daytime
when you're not Mr. Badass?
What station do you pump gas at, or
can't you read the numbers on the pumps?
You're pretty, lettuce farmer, with your
golden hair and surfer build.
You tempt me -- make me want to gun this
white T-Bird and catch up with you.
But I don't have time to mix business
with pleasure,
So it will have to wait, lettuce farmer,
until I have some free time,
Or until you decide
to grow up.

That's Two Ya Owe Me, Junior!

That's two ya owe me, Junior!

C'mon, kid.
You know what I mean
Twice I saved your ass!

Remember the Death Star?
Tarkin's little toy?
Well ....

Then Hoth --
frozen hell, right?
How would you know, kid?
You were nice and warm
that long, long night.

And I bet ya didn't know
just who
has been keepin' an eye on ya
these last coupla years.

Nah ... not that old wizard --
me!

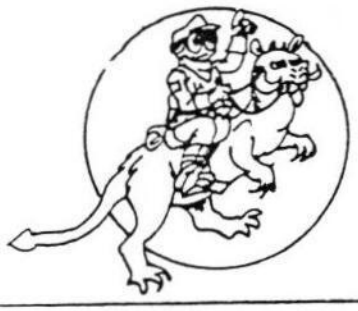
So, uh ... kid,
it's time to pay up.
Quit foolin' around with my princess
And get my friggin' ass
the hell outta this frozen waterbed!

by

Catherine

Strand

May 22-25, 1981
Lansing, Michigan



MEDIA WEST CON
THE MIDWEST STRIKES BACK I

$10 & 3 s.a.s.e.s
or
$10.45
or
$10 and 3 15¢ stamps
until December 15th

West*ConReKWest*ConSeKWester*ConSeKWester*ConIIT'Con2'ConMediaWest*ConIKWest*ConReKWest*ConSeKWester

The Midwest Strikes Back

It is a time of conventional rebellion. In desperation, the rebels have escaped from the smog planet N'Yoth and are making plans to regroup on the planet Michigan.

Star Date: The Motion Picture

"Where is it headed?" asked Kirk.
"Toward Earth. It will arrive sometime between May 22 and 25, 1981," replied Spock. "Captain -- it's like no con we've seen before!"

Dr. Where

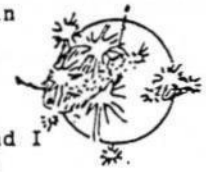
Sara Jane stepped out of the Tardis, immediately stunned by the melange of strangely-dressed aliens. "Good Lord, where are we?"
"I'd say in front of the Lansing Hilton," replied the good doctor. "Have a jelly baby?"

Husky and Starch

"How much?" asked Hutch.
"Ten buck," said the hooker.

The Con From U.N.C.L.E.

"Open Channel D."
"What is it, Mr. Solo?" came the reply.
"I've discovered the identities of the members of the Central Committee involved in 'The Michigan Fen Affair' ... "
"Oh, yes -- Paula Smith, Lori Chapek-Carleton, and Gordon Carleton. Mr. Kuryakin reported that information hours ago," Waverly said.
"Oh," Solo replied.

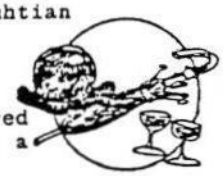


Con Encounters

"I recognize that sound!" exclaimed the pudgy little man. "That's the same sound I heard when I was playing with my mashed potatoes last night! Of course, it's a code! Longitude and latitude ... get the globe!"
The room emptied as the technicians broke into an office and rolled the globe back to the trailer.
"Look -- it's 5132 Jo-Don Dr., East Lansing, MI, 48823 ... " A smile spread across the little man's face. "That's it! That's where they want us to send the checks!"

Draftula

The bat shape dissolved into the form of a man, who slowly strode toward the beautiful young woman. Gently, he brushed her long hair back from the side of her head and leaned forward. His breath was hot on her neck. He whispered, "Make checks payable to T'Kuhtian Press ... "



The Conventioners

There was a knock at the door of the stylish London flat. A striking, dark-haired woman in a tight-fitting jumpsuit crossed the floor. Before she could open the door, a sheet of paper slid through the crack below.
On the paper was a message made up of letters cut from the evening edition of the Times. It read: "VolUnteErs neeDed foR pAn dLs. PaNEL sUggEsTiONs aLso AppREciAteD. SeNd SUGgestions tO sMitH -- a friEnd."
The door opened. The brunette immediately fell into a defensive stance until she recognized the Bowler perched on the end of the umbrella stuck through the opening.
"Mrs. Peel, we're needed," commented an urbane voice from the other end of the umbrella.

A T'KUHTIAN PRESS/BOOJUMS PRESS PRODUCTION

T'Kuhtian Press
Lori Chapek-Carleton/Gordon Carleton
5132 Jo-Don Dr.
East Lansing, MI 48823

boojums Press
Paula Smith
507 Locust St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007